

46. 16. 35  
*Now or Never.*

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*The Holy, Serious, Diligent  
Believer Justified, Encouraged,  
Excited and Directed. And the  
Opposers and Neglecters convince-  
ed by the light of Scripture and  
Reason.*

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*By Richard Baxter.*

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*To be Communicated, by such as  
want ability or opportunity themselves  
to plead the Cause of Serious Holiness,  
for mens Conviction.*

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*Luke 7. 35. But wisdom is justified of all  
her children.*

*Nihil est ad defendendum Puritate tutius:  
nihil ad dicendum Veritate facilius.  
Ambros.*

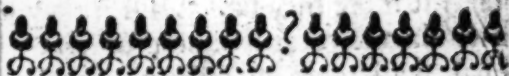
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1430:90





# THE PREFACE.



It is a question more boldly than accurately debated by many, *[Whether a man may not be saved in any Religion, that is faithful to the principles of it by serious diligent practice?]* The true Solution is this: Religion is that which men hold and do to serve and please God. 1. If men make themselves a Religion of serving Idols or Devils instead of God. 2. Or if they place their service to God himself in things that are evil (as what evil is there that some men have not brought into their Religion, and fathered upon God?) the more diligent such men are in their Religion,

gion, the more they sin. 3. Or if they make themselves a Religion of irrational ludicrous ceremonies, their greatest diligence in this will not save them. 4. Or if they hold all the Essentials of the True Religion, except some one, it cannot save them while *one* thing is wanting which is *Essential* to that Religion, and so necessary to salvation ( which is the case of real Hereticks : ) For they are not indeed of *that* Religion, if they want that which is *Essential* to it. 5. Or if they hold all that is *Essential* to the *true Religion* only *Notionally*, and hold any thing with it *practically*, which is contradictory and inconsistent with it, the soundness of the *Notional belief* will not save them from the mortal poison of their *Practical* Heresie or Error.

But 1. Whosoever holdeth all that is necessary to salvation, and is *serious* and *diligent* in living according thereunto, shall be saved, whatever error he holdeth with it. For if he be *serious* and

and *diligent* in the Practice of all things *Necessary* to salvation, he hath all that is *necessary* to salvation, viz. in *Belief* and *Practice* : And it must needs follow, that his *Errors* are either not contradictory to the things *Necessary* which he holdeth and practiseth, or that he holdeth not those *Errors Practically*, but *Notionally*, as an Opinion, or uneffectual Cogitation in a dream, which provoketh not to action ; And in such a case the error keepeth no man from salvation.

What is necessary to be believed by them that never hear the Gospel, it so little concerneth us to know, that God had not thought meet to make it so plain to us, as things that more concern our selves. But as it is certain, that without the Attonement, Satisfaction, and Reconciliation made by Christ, and without new terms of Grace to be judged by, and without his Grace for the performance of their part, no man can be saved ( that hath

the use of reason, ) so there is so much knowledge necessary to salvation, as is necessary, [ to engage the heart to love : God above all, and sincerely to obey his revealed will, and to prefer the life to come before the transitory pleasures of this life. ] Now if any man can prove to me, that those that never heard the Gospel, can thus love God, and the life to come, and obey sincerely, without the knowledge of the person, life, death, resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Declaration of the attractive Love and Goodness of God in him, and in the work of our Redemption, then I should believe that such Negative Infidels may be saved : For God cannot damn a sanctified soul, that sincerely loveth him. But if the discovery of the Love of God in our Redemption be so necessary a moral means to engage the heart (now corrupted by sin and creature-love) to the true Love of God, that this love cannot be wrought without it; or

if

if Christ give not his *Spirit* to produce, the Love of God in any but those that hear the Gospel, and believe in him, then no such persons can be saved by their Religion. For Christ is the way to the Father, and no man cometh to the Father but by him; and the Love of God is absolutely and of its self necessary to salvation; and Faith in Christ is so far necessary to salvation, as it is necessary to bring men to the Love of God, as pardoning sin and reconciled to them.

But if any should never so confidently conclude, that some that hear not of Christ may be saved, yet he must needs confess that the want of this clear and great discovery of the Love and goodness of God, in his pardoning grace, and of the glorious life which he hath prepared for us, must needs make the Love of God a very rare and difficult thing, and consequently their salvation rare and difficult, in comparison of ours.

The Christian Faith, is [The believing

an everlasting life of happiness to be given by God ( with the pardon of all sin ) as procured by the sufferings and merits of Jesus Christ , to all that are sanctified by the Holy Ghost , and do persevere in love to God , and to each other , and in a holy and heavenly conversation. ] This is saving Faith and Christianity , if we Consent as well as Assent. All that was necessary to salvation to be believed , was formerly thought to be contained in the Creed , and that was the test or symbol of the Christian Faith ; and Christian Religion is the same , and hath the same rule , and test , and symbol in all ages. But since Faction and Tyranny , Pride and Covetousness became the matters of the Religion of too many , vice , and selfish-interest hath commanded them to change the Rule of Faith by their additions , and to make so much necessary to salvation , as is necessary to their affected Universal Dominion , and to their Commodity and carnal ends. And since Faction entered , and hath torn the Church

Church into many Sects ( the Greek the Roman , the Armenian, the Jacobites, the Abassine, and many more ) it seemeth meet to the more tyrannical Sect to call these *several Religions* , and to say that every man that differeth from them in any of their opinions or additions, which they please to call Articles of Faith, is of another Religion.

\* And if the word Religion be taken in *And yet when they have divided the Church , and damned the greatest part of Christians , and raged with fire and sword against the brethren , they confess themselves that it is no point of faith at all , that it is of Divine right that the Bishop of Rome is St. Peters Successor , and not only of humane right . And must the Church be divided , and must be damned for not believing or submitting to a humane Ordinance ? If we be of many Religions , is not Popery then a humane Religion ? The very words of Smith Bishop of Chaledon , the chiefest of the English Polish Clergy , are these . Survey c. 5. " To " us it sufficeth that the Bishop of Rome is " St. Peters Successor , and this all the Fathers " testifie , and all the Catholick Church believe " eth ; but whether it be jure divino , or " humano , is no point of faith . ] And how do their laicks here know what is a point of faith , but by the testimony of their Priests ?*

this

this sense, and if all that agree in *One Christian Religion*, are said to be of as many *Religions*, as different opinions, in points that some call necessary, then I answer the Question thus. He is the true Catholick Christian that hath but *One*, even the *Christian Religion*: And this is the case of the Protestants, who casting off the additions of Popery, adhere to the Primitive simplicity and unity: If Papists, or any others, corrupt this Religion with humane additions and innovations, the great danger of these Corruptions, is, lest they draw them from the sound belief and *serious Practice* of that ancient Christianity, which we are all agreed in: And (among Papists, or any other Sect) where their corruptions do not thus corrupt their *Faith* and *Practice* in the true *Essentials*, it is certain that those corruptions shall not damn them. For he that truly believeth all things that



that are essential to Christianity, and liveth accordingly with *serious diligence*, hath the promise of salvation: And it is certain, that what error that man holdeth, it is either not inconsistent with true Christianity, or not *practically*, but *notionally* held, and so not inconsistent as held by him: For how can that be inconsistent which *actually* doth consist with it?

If a Papist or any other Sectary do seriously Love God, and his Brother; and set his heart upon the Life to come, and give up himself to the merits and grace of Jesus Christ, and the sanctification of the holy Spirit, to be fitted for that Glory, and liveth by faith above the world, and mortifieth the desires of the flesh, and liveth wilfully in no known sin, but presseth after further degrees of holiness, I doubt not of the salvation of that person: No more than of the life of him that

that hath taken poison but into his mouth and spit it out again, or let down so little as nature and antidotes do expel : But I will not therefore plead for poison, nor take it, because men may live that thus take it.

Having answered this great Question, Reader, I am now come up to the subject of my following discourse, and to tell thee that though it be a great question whether *serious diligence* in a corrupt Religion will save a man, it is past all question, and agreed on by all sides, that no Religion will save a man, that is not *serious, sincere, and diligent* in it. It thou be of the truest Religion in the world; and art not true thyself to that Religion, the Religion is good, but it is none of thine. Objectively thou art of a true and good Religion, the things in themselves are true and good, but *subjectively* thou art sincerely of no Religion at all; for

for if thou art not *serious*, *heartly* and *diligent* in it, it is certain that thou dost not *truly* entertain it, and make it thine; but it is thy *Books* that have the true *Religion*, or thy *tongue*, or *fantasie*, or *brain*, but not thy *heart*: And the best meat on *thy table*, or that goeth no further than thy *mouth*, will never feed thee, or preserve thy life. So certain is the salvation of every holy mortified Christian, and so certain the damnation of every *ungodly*, worldly, fleshly sensualist, that I had a thousand-fold rather have my soul in the case of a godly *Anabaptist*, yea or a Monk, or Fryar among the Papists that liveth a truly heavenly life, in the love of God and man, and in a *serious diligent* obedience to God according to his knowledge, than in the case of a Protestant, or whomsoever you can imagine to be rightest in his opinions, that is *worldly*, and *sensual* and a stranger (if not an enemy) to the

the

the power and serious practice of his own profest Religion, and void of a Holy and Heavenly heart and life. If ever such a man be saved, the principles of all Religion do deceive us.

And certainly such mens *hypocrisie* doth aggravate their sin, and will increase their misery. So many as there be in the world, that profess themselves *Christians*, and yet are not serious and diligent in their Religion, but are ungodly neglecters or enemies of a holy life, so many *Hypocrites* are in the world. And I wonder that their consciences call them not *Hypocrites*, when they stand up at the Creed, or profess themselves Believers: Though the Congregation seeth not [*hypocrite*] written in their foreheads, God seeth it written on their hearts, and those that converse with them may see it written in their lives. And yet these men are the forwardest to cry out against

against *Hypocrites* : The Devil hath  
 taught it them to stop the *suspition* and  
 the *chase* of conscience, as he hath  
 taught the greatest *Schismatics* or  
 Church-dividers (the Papists) to cry  
 out most against *Schism* and division,  
 and pretend to *unity*. But these shifts  
 do blind none but fools, and forsaken  
 consciences; and the cheat that is now  
 detected by the wise, will quickly by  
 God be detected before all the world.  
 Till then let them make merry in their  
 deceits : who would envy the drun-  
 kard the pleasure of an hours swinish  
 sick delight? This is *their portion*;  
 and this is *their time* : As we have  
 chosen and covenanted for *another*  
*portion*, we are content to stay the *time*  
 assigned, till God shall tell them and  
 all the world, who was *sincere*, and  
 who the *hypocrite*. For our parts,  
 we believe that he is *most* or *least*  
*sincere*, that is *most* or *least* *serious*  
 in the *practice* of his own profest Re-  
 ligion.

For

For my part, I must profess that ( by the mercy of God ) I have made it the work of many a year, to look about me, and think wherein the felicity of man doth indeed consist: And I have long been past doubt ( as much as I am that I am a man ) that it is not in transitory sensual delights; and that these are such lean and dry commodities, and pittiful pleasures, leaving men so speedily in a forlorn state, that I am contented that my greatest enemy have my part of them. I have renounced them to God ( as any part of my felicity ) and I renounce them to men: Let them do with me about these things as God will give them leave. I will have a portion after death, or Ile have none.

And the case is so palpable, that it is my admiration that the contrary deceit is consistent with the nature and reason of a man; and that so many Gentlemen, and Scholars,

lars, and persons of an ingenuous education, can no better distinguish, and can possibly conquer their reason so easily with the presence of sensual delights, and so easily make nothing of that which *will be to morrow and for ever*, merely because *it is not to day*. Well! I must say, the Wisdom and Justice of God is abundantly seen in the Government of the world with the Liberty of the will, and determining that *all men should speed as they chuse*.

It may be the Reader will say, he expected that instead of writing such popular discourses, I should have *vindicated my self* against the accusations, that in multitudes of Libels and Pamphlets are scattered abroad against me. But doth he think that man is *seriously a Christian* that is not more zealous for God and Religion, and the souls of men, than for *himself*? Have I nothing  
 else

else to do with my *time* and *labour*,  
 but plead a cause of *my own*, which  
*God* will so *speedily* and *effectually*  
 plead? Will it not be *time enough*  
 to be justified at the Bar and Day of  
 God? I am content that they carry  
 it as they desire till then ( were it  
 not more for their own and other  
 mens sakes than mine. ) I am like to  
*forsake my life and all* for Christ,  
 and endure torments if I were called  
 to it, if I cannot endure to be re-  
 viled and slandered by passionate  
 men? Was it nothing that our  
 Lord would *not answer for himself*,  
 when he was accused before Pi-  
 late? Shall they be able to calumni-  
 ate under the threatnings of the  
 revenge of Heaven? and shall I not  
 be able to be silent under such a  
 promise, as *Matth. 5. 10, 11, 12.*  
*The servant of the Lord must not*  
*strive!* Our Lord gave us an ex-  
 ample of not reviling again, when  
 we was reviled: He made himself of  
 no



no reputation, but endured the Cross and contradiction of sinners, despising the shame. I confess I think when Gods interest, and the good of others doth require it, a man should not be wanting to his own defence, and I have long ago written that which will satisfie the impartial; But when I saw that it is like to tend to heats, and set more on work, I had rather let men call me all the names they can devise; and voluminously accuse me of any thing that malice shall suggest, than do any thing to foment contentions in the Church. But if God convince me that it is my duty to detect the calumnies of men, it is a work soon done.

But what good will it do the world for me to open the numerous untruths that other men have published, or to confute every Script; when all that I converse with are satisfied already, and believe not the reproachers;

proachers; and all the evidence in the world will not satisfie those that *will not read it*, or are resolved by their *malice* or *interest* never to be satisfied?

For my part, I doubt not but God and their Consciences will give them such a Confutation as shall be sufficient to them and me to end the Controverſie.

My work is to plead the Cause of God and Ho'ineſs againſt the profane and ſensual world, and no further to plead any Cause of my own, than is neceſſary to that. If I *muſt* bear the effects of mens diſpleaſure, I had an hundred times rather it were for pleading for Ho'ineſs, and Love, and Peace, and Concord, againſt impiety, uncharitableneſs, and diviſions, than for defending my ſelf, or upon the account of Ceremonies or ſmaller matters. And if for *theſe* I bear it, I doubt not of more comfort at the

the present, much less do I doubt of a better *issue* than false accusers can expect. We shall be shortly upon even ground : The time is short : The pleasures of sin, the triumphs of malice, the sufferings of innocency are but for a moment. I envy them not so short and dark a day : The Judge is at the door that will judge all again, and set all strait, and judge in righteousness. When I am afraid of leaving a noisom and unrighteous world, and ending all my pain and trouble, and being beyond the reach of malice, then I will fear what man can do. Let them keep me out of Heaven, or deprive me of my peace and comfort if they can : If they fear not the *threatnings* of God against the malicious and unjust ; surely I have less reason to fear *their threatnings*. When they have done their worst to others, let them save themselves from death if they can : I am devoted

devoted to God, and I never yet found cause to repent it: I am resolved to use the utmost of my power for the interest of Holiness, Charity and Peace, and for Loyalty to the King, and obedience or patient submission to superiours: And if yet I bear the fruits of fury, let those that insult over sufferers, as if they were therefore guilty or miserable, remember that we could have avoided it if we would, and could have found the way of applause and prosperity as well as they; and that no man takes that for his misery which he chooseth. If this kind of preaching or writing offend, could not I have avoided it? I am not in love with suffering from men, nor will I escape them at the rates of Gods displeasure. I never think my self in the highest form of Christians, till I am more conform to the sufferings of Christ, and have endured more than yet I have.

It is the Christians old Apology in Tertullian : [ *Quasi non totum quod in nos potestis nostrum sit Arbitrium ! Certe si velim Christianus sum : tunc ergo me damnabis , si damnari velim : Quum vero quod in me potes , nisi velim non potes , jam mea voluntatis est quod potes , non tue potestatis : Proinde & vulgus vane de nostra vexatione gaudet , Proinde & nostram est gaudium quod sibi vendicant , qui malumus damnari quam à Deo excidere. Contra , ibi qui nos oderunt , dolere non gaudere debebant , consecutis nobis quod eligimus. ] Tert. Apologet. cap. 39.*

That is. " As if all that you can do  
 " against us were not our own  
 " choice ! ( or will ) Certainly it is  
 " because *I will* that I am a Chri-  
 " stian ; therefore if *I will* be con-  
 " demned , then thou wilt condemn  
 " me. And when that which thou  
 " canst do against me , thou canst  
 " not do , unless *I will* , it is not  
 " ( a ) " now

" now from thy power that thou canst  
 " do it, but from my will : And  
 " therefore the vulgar do in vain  
 " rejoyce at our vexation. And there-  
 " fore it is our joy, which they chal-  
 " lenge to themselves, while we had  
 " rather be condemned than fall from  
 " God. On the contrary, they that  
 " hate us, should grieve and not re-  
 " joyce, while we attain but what we  
 " chuse. ]

For my part, if the world will  
 needs be mad, I think both the  
 laughing and the weeping Philoso-  
 pher are more excusable than he  
 that would be over-angry at them, or  
 over-busy in disputing with them;  
 saith Seneca [ *Quare scrs egri ra-  
 biem & phrenetici verba? nempe quia  
 videntur nescire quid faciunt. Quid  
 interest quo quisque vitio fiat im-  
 prudens? Sen. de Ira. l. 3. c. 26. An-  
 ger and Phrensie are but several  
 wayes of a mans losing his wit; and  
 therefore he that can bear with one,  
 should*

should somewhat bear with the other :  
 ( Though indeed *voluntariness*, or  
 involuntariness maketh a great difference. ) It is not worth a mans  
 time, and labour, and cost, to be  
 over-solicitous in his own vindication,  
 let the world say of him what they  
 please. [ *Multum temporis ultis ab-*  
*sumit : Multis se injuriis objicit, dum*  
*unam dolet. Diutius irascimur omnes*  
*quam laedimur.* ] Sen. de Ira. l. 3.  
 c. 27. " Revenge takes up a deal  
 " of time : He that complaineth of  
 " one injury, objects himself to  
 " many. We are all angry longer  
 " than we are hurt.

I have truly given you now the  
 Reasons, why I rather chuse to  
 speak these common necessary things,  
 against the Devils party, the ungod-  
 ly, the enemies, or neglecters of se-  
 rious Holiness, ( agreable to the sub-  
 ject of his Majesties Christian and ex-  
 cellent Declaration against Debauche-  
 ry at his entrance upon his Royal

Government ) than to middle with any of the contending parties of these times ( who are so angry because in obedience to Authority I once endeavoured to reconcile them ) or to be unseasonable in pleading any cause that is my own. And now referring the Reader to this short Discourse, I must first desire that he misunderstand me not in one or two passages. 1. That my citation of the *passage in the Homilies*, be not taken as if I spoke a word against it, though I say, I dare not myself subscribe it: For though I think myself, that seeing a *persecutor like Saul* may repent, and be *pardoned*; a *mock* at *Godliness* may Repent and be *forgiven also*: Yet I am resolved still to suspect my own understanding, rather than to *speak against the doctrine of the Church*.

2. Think it not strange that I reprehend even Ministers that are secret, or open opposers of a holy diligence: For our fore said Homily  
telle h



telleth us, as followeth : Hom. for  
 Information, &c. part 2. p. 150, 151.  
 [ Examples of such scorers, we read  
 in 2. Chron. " When the good King  
 " *Hezekiah*, in the beginning of his  
 " Reign had destroyed Idolatry,  
 " purged the Temple, and Reform-  
 " ed Religion in his Realm, he sent  
 " Messengers into every City to ga-  
 " ther the people to *Jerusalem* to  
 " solemnize the Feast of Easter in  
 " such sort as God had appointed.  
 " The Posts went from City to  
 " City.-----And what did the peo-  
 " ple think ye? Did they laud and  
 " praise the name of the Lord that  
 " had given them so good a King,  
 " so zealous a Prince to abolish  
 " Idolatry, and to restore again  
 " Gods true Religion? No, no;  
 " the Scripture saith, the people  
 " laughed them to scorn, and  
 " mocked the Kings Messengers.  
 " And in the last Chapter of the  
 " same Book it is written, that A-  
 "

"mighty God having compassion  
 "on his people, sent his Messen-  
 "gers the Prophets to them, to  
 "call them from their abominable  
 "Idolatry, and wicked kind of live-  
 "ing: But they mocked his Mes-  
 "sengers, they despised his words,  
 "and misused his Prophets, untill  
 "the wrath of the Lord arose  
 "against his people, and till there  
 "was no remedy. ]—The wick-  
 "ed people that were in the dayes  
 "of *Noah* made but a mock at the  
 "word of God, when *Noah* told  
 "them that God would take ven-  
 "geance on them for their sine——  
 "Lot preached to the *Sodomites*, that  
 "except they repented, both they  
 "and their City should be destroyed;  
 "They thought his sayings impos-  
 "sible to be true; they scorned and  
 "mocked his admonitions, and re-  
 "puted him as an old doting fool:  
 "But God —— burnt up those  
 "scorners and mockers of his holy  
 "Word.

" Word. And what estimation had  
 " Christs Doctrine among the Scribes  
 " and Pharisees? What reward had  
 " he among them?—The Phari-  
 " sees which were covetous, did  
 " scorn him in his Doctrine. O then  
 " ye see that worldly rich men do  
 " scorn the Doctrine of their salva-  
 " tion; the worldly wise men scorn  
 " the Doctrine of Christ as foolish-  
 " ness to their understandings.  
 " These scorers have ever been, and  
 " ever shall be to the worlds end.  
 " For St. Peter prophesied, that such  
 " scorers should be in the end be-  
 " fore the latter day. Take heed  
 " therefore my brethren, take heed;  
 " be ye not scorers of Gods most  
 " Holy Word: provoke him not to  
 " pour out his wrath upon you, as  
 " he did upon those Gibbers and  
 " Mockers: Be not wilful murder-  
 " ers of your own souls. ] Thus far  
 the Homily.

And no marvel if Priests may  
 ( a 4 ) be

be guilty as well as people, if it be  
 true that is said by the Church in  
 Homil. 3. against Peril of Idola-  
 try, pag. 56, 57. [ " But a true  
 " Preacher to stay this mischief, is in  
 " very many places scarcely heard  
 " once in the whole year, and  
 " somewhere not once in seven  
 " year, as it is evident to be proved,  
 " Further it appeareth not by any  
 " story of credit, that true and  
 " sincere Preaching hath endured  
 " in any one place above an hun-  
 " dred years. ] But it is evident that  
 " Images, superstition, and wor-  
 " shipping of Images, and Idolatry,  
 " have continued many hundred  
 " years. ——— For Preaching of Gods  
 " Word ( most sincere in the begin-  
 " ing ) by process of time waxed  
 " less and less pure, and after cor-  
 " rupt, and last of all altogether  
 " laid down and left off, and other  
 " inventions of men crept in place  
 " of it. ——— So that Laity and Cler-  
 " gy,

" gy, learned and unlearned, all ages,  
 " sects, and degrees of men, women,  
 " and children of whole Christen-  
 " dom ( a most horrible and most  
 " dreadful thing to think ) have been  
 " at once drowned in abominable  
 " Idolatry, of all other vices most  
 " detested of God, and most dam-  
 " nable to man, and that by the space,  
 " of eight hundred years. So far the  
 Church of *England*.

And though I am far from cre-  
 diting the many fabulous stories in  
 that and such other Books; yet I  
 shall recite one instance in the life  
 of *Philip Nerius*, the Father of the  
 Oratorians, which shall shew you,  
 that even among the Papists, *holy*  
*serious diligence* where it is, hath the  
 same usage from the prophane both  
 Clergy and Laity, as in other places,  
 and so that every where *Holiness* is  
 persecuted by men professing the  
 same Religion with those they per-  
 secute.

The meetings of the Oratorians and their exercises, so like those now abhorr'd by many, are by *Baronius* (that was one of them) thus described, as you may see in the life of *Nerius*, P. 45.

“Certainly by the Divine Wisdom was it brought to pass, that  
 “in our times ——— Assemblies  
 “were instituted in the City, much-  
 “what after the form of those  
 “Apostolical Conventions; such  
 “especially as by the Apostle were  
 “appointed for discoursing of Divine matters, both for edifying  
 “the hearers, and for propagating  
 “the Church. ——— It was  
 “agreed; that the zealous Christians  
 “should meet a dayes at Saint  
 “*Hieroms* Oratory, and there a  
 “Religious meeting should be held  
 “after this manner. First; silence  
 “being made, they began with  
 “prayer, and one of the brothers  
 “reads some pious lesson. At the  
 “reading

"reading of which, the Father used  
 "to interpose upon occasion, ex-  
 "plaining more fully, enlarging and  
 "vehemently inculcating on the  
 "minds of the auditors the things  
 "read, continuing his discourse  
 "sometime a whole hour (to the  
 "great satisfaction of the hearers)  
 "dialogue-wise, asking some of the  
 "company their opinions of such a  
 "thing. Afterward, by his ap-  
 "pointment, one of them went up  
 "into the desk, raised upon steps;  
 "and made an Oration, without  
 "flourishes, or varnish of Language,  
 "composed out of the approved  
 "and choice lives of Saints, Sacred  
 "Writ, and sentences of holy Fa-  
 "thers. He that succeeded him,  
 "discoursed after the same manner,  
 "but on a differing matter. Then  
 "followed the third, who related  
 "some part of the Church story  
 "in the order of its several ages.  
 "Every of these had his half-hour  
 "allotted

"allotted him, and performed all  
 "with marvelous delight and ap-  
 "probation : Then singing some  
 "Hymn, and going to prayers  
 "again, the company broke up.  
 "All things thus ordered, and rati-  
 "fied by the Pope, as far as the  
 "times would suffer, the beautiful  
 "face of the Primitive Apostoli-  
 "cal assembling, seemed to be revi-  
 "ved again; whereat all good men  
 "rejoycing, and many taking their  
 "Model from them, the like exer-  
 "cises of piety were set up and pra-  
 "ctised in other places. ] So far Bo-  
*ronius.*

If any say that this long and zealous exercise was not in private houses; I answer, Allow us an Oration, as the Pope himself allowed them, and we had rather far be there than in private houses : But if any that hinder such from being publick, shall then reproach it for being in a less publick place, they scarce



scarce play fair. The Church of *England*, in the third part of the Sermon against peril of Idolatry, pag. 66, 67. saith. "In *Maximinian* and *Constantius* the Emperours Proclamation, the places where Christians resorted to Publick Prayer, were called Conventicles.] See further.

But how were the Oratorians esteemed and used? In Chap. 16. of *Nerius's* persecutions, after the mention of mens rancour and railing that maligned him, it follows, page 56. that "The Prelate that was Deputy of the City, moved by the reports of them that bore a spleen to *Philip*, sent for him, and reprehended him sharply: "Is it not a shame (saith he) that you who profess a contempt of the world, should hunt for popular applause, and walk through the City guarded with troops, with such nets as these fishing

“ fishing for Church-preferments ? ]

“ When having shrewdly taunt-  
 “ ed him with such like expressi-  
 “ ons, he prohibits him the hear-  
 “ ing of Confessions for fifteen  
 “ dayes, and to use the customs  
 “ of the Oratory, but by leave  
 “ first obtained, or to lead about  
 “ with him any companies of men,  
 “ threatening imprisonment upon  
 “ his disobedience : Neither would  
 “ he let him depart till he put in  
 “ security for his appearance, say-  
 “ ing—Come, you do all this  
 “ not for the glory of God, but to  
 “ make a party for your self.—

“ Mean time, while the good man  
 “ was commending himself to God,  
 “ having intreated divers religious  
 “ persons to be instant in Prayer  
 “ about this business, one appear-  
 “ eth and saith—[ This trouble  
 “ shall be quickly over, and the  
 “ work that is begun be more  
 “ strongly confirmed, they who  
 “ resist

"resist now, shall assist hereafter;  
 "and if any one shall dare to op-  
 "pose it any longer, God shall  
 "speedily avnge it on him; the  
 "Prelate, that is your chiefest ad-  
 "versary, shall certainly dye with-  
 "in fifteen dayes. ]——— And it  
 "fell out precisely as he foretold:  
 "for the Prelate ( the Popes De-  
 "puty ) relating the proceedings  
 "to his Holiness somewhat par-  
 "tially, died suddenly———No  
 "sooner was this blaze of perse-  
 "cution out, but a much fiercer  
 "was kindled against the Order:  
 "For under pretext of Piety and  
 "Religion, some possessed the  
 "Pope that the Preachers of Saint  
 "*Hieroms* many times delivered  
 "things ridiculous and unsound,  
 "which argued high indiscretion or  
 "ignorance, and must needs endan-  
 "ger their hearers.———]

I would not have troubled you  
 with any of these citations, but to let  
 let

let those know that are offended at my reproof of impious Ministers, that in all places and parties in the world where there is any *serious diligence* for salvation, there are always enemies of the same Profession, even among the Clergy at well as others. The hindering of *Holy Diligence* and *Seriousness*, is the work of the Devil and his Instruments in the world. The promoting it is the work of Christ, and of his servants. The great actions of the world are but the conflictings of these two Armies, the salvation of the Conquerours, and the damnation of the conquered being the end. By this contending for *Faith* and *Holiness*, and bearing the *Cross*, I take myself bound to perform my Covenant of [professing the Faith of Christ crucified, and manfully fighting under his Banner against the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, to my lives end.] Reader, thou  
art

(37)

art engaged to the like as well as  
I, and shalt be judged according-  
ly, and reap as thou hast sowed.  
**CHUSE** (and **DO** as thou wilt  
**SPEED.**

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The


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(22)  
as well as the like as well as  
the like be found according  
to the like of the like  
CHURCH and the like  
APPEAL

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## THE



Eccles. 9. 10.

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might : for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest.*



He mortality of man being the principle subject of Solomon in this Chapter, and observing that wisdom and piety exempt not men from death, he first hence infers ; that Gods love or hatred to one man above another is not to be gathered by his dealing with them here, where all things in the common course of providence do come alike to all. The common sin hath introduced death as a

*common punishment, which levelleth all, and endeth all the contrivances, businesses, and enjoyments of this life, to good and bad; and the discriminating Justice is not ordinarily manifested here: An Epicure or Infidel would think Solomon were here pleading their unmanly impious cause: But it is not the cessation of the life, or operations, or enjoyments of the soul that he is speaking of, as if there were no life to come, or the soul of man were not immortal; But it is the cessation of all the actions, and honours, and pleasure of this life, which to good or bad shall be no more. Here they have no more reward, the memory of them will be here forgotten. They have no more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the Sun, Vers. 5, 6.*

From hence he further inferreth, that the comforts of life are but short and transitory, and therefore that what the creature can afford, must be presently taken; And as the wicked

ed shall have no more but present pleasures, so the faithful may take their lawful comforts in the present moderate use of creatures; For if their delightful goodness be of right and use to any, it is to them; And therefore, though they may not use them to their hurt, to the pampering of their flesh, and strengthening their lusts, and hindering spiritual duties, benefits, and salvation; yet must they serve the Lord with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, which he giveth them, *Dent. 28. 47.*

Next he interreth from the brevity of mans life, the *Necessity of speed* and *Diligence in his duty*. And this is in the words of my Text: where you have, 1. *The duty commanded.* 2. *The reason or motive to enforce it.*

The Duty is in the first part, [*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do*] that is, whatever work is assigned thee by God to do in this thy transitory life,

[ *do it with thy might* ] ( that is ,  
 1. *Speedily*, without delay. 2. *Diligently* ; and as well as thou art able ;  
 and not with sloathfulness , or by  
 the halves. )

2. The *Motive* is in the latter  
 part ; [ *For there is no work, nor de-  
 vice, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in  
 the Grave whither thou goest* ] ( that  
 is, It must be *now or never* : The  
 Grave ; where thy work cannot be  
 done , will quickly end thy oppor-  
 tunities. ) The *Caldee Paraphrase* ap-  
 propriates the sense too narrowly  
 to works of Charity, or Alms ; [ *what-  
 soever good and Alms giving thou find-  
 est to do :* ] And the Moving Reason  
 they read accordingly [ *for nothing  
 but thy works of righteousness and mer-  
 cy follow thee.* ] But the words are  
 more general, and the sense is obvious,  
 contained in these two Propositi-  
 ons.

Doctr. 1. *The work of this life can-  
 not be done, when this life is ended. Or,  
 There*



There is no working in the Grave, to which we are all making hast.

Doctr. 2. Therefore while we have time, we must do our best : or do the work of this present life with vigour and diligence.

It is from an unquestionable and commonly acknowledged truth, that Solomon here urgeth us to diligence in duty ; and therefore to prove it would be but loss of time. As there are two worlds for man to live in, and so two lives for man to live ; so each of these lives hath its peculiar employment. This is the life of preparation : the next is the life of our reward or punishment : We are now but in the Womb of Eternity, and must live hereafter in the open world. We are now but set to school to learn the work that we must do for ever : This is the time of our Apprentiship : we are learning the trade that we must live upon in Heaven. We run now,

that we may then receive the Crown : we fight now , that we may then triumph in victory. The Grave hath no work : But Heaven hath work, and Hell hath suffering, There is no Repentance unto life hereafter : But there is Repentance unto torment, and to desperation. There is no Believing of a Happiness unscen in order to the obtaining of it : or of a misery unscen in order to the escaping of it ; nor believing in a Saviour in order to these ends ; But there is the fruition of the Happiness which was here believed ; and feeling of the misery that men would not believe ; and suffering from him as a righteous Judge, whom they rejected as merciful Saviour. So that it is not a work that ceaseth at our death : but only the work of this present life.

And indeed no reason can shew us the least probability of doing our work when our Time is done, that was given us to do it in. If it can be done, it must be, 1. By the recalling of our Time. 2. By the return of life. 3. Or

3. Or by opportunity in another life :  
But there is no hope of any of these.

1. Who knoweth not that *Time cannot be recalled* ? That which *once Was*, will be no more. *Yesterday* will never come again. *To day* is passing, and will not return. You may work while it is day : but when you have lost that day, it will not return for you to work in. While your *candle burneth*, you may make use of its light : but when it is *done*, it is too late to use it. No force of Medicine, no Orators elegant persuasions, no worldings wealth, no Princes power, can call back one day or hour of time. If they could, what endeavours would there be used, when extremity hath taught them to value what they now despise ? what chaffering would there be at last, if *Time* could be *purchased*, for any thing that man can give. Then Misers would bring out their wealth, and say, *All this will I give for one days time of Repentance more* : And Lords,

and Knights would lay down their Honours, and say, *Take all, and let us be the basest beggars, if we may but have one year of the Time that we misspent!* Then Kings would lay down their Crowns, and say, *Let us be equal with the lowest subjects, so we may but have the time again that we wasted in the Cares and Pleasures of the world.* Kingdoms would then seem a contemptible price for the recovery of Time. The Time that is now idled and talked away; the Time that is now feasted and complemented away; that is unnecessarily sported and slept away; that is wickedly and presumptuously sin'd away; how precious will it one day seem to all? How happy a bargain would they think that they had made, if at the dearest rates they could redeem it? The prophanest Mariner falls a praying, when he fears his Time is at an end. If importunity would then prevail, how earnestly would they pray for the recovery of Time, that formerly decided

rided praying, or minded it not, or could not have while, or mocked God with lip service, and customary forms, and feigned words in stead of praying? What a Liturgie would Death teach the trifling Time-despising Gallants, the idle, busie, dreaming-active, ambitious, covetous Lovers of this world, if Time could be intreated to return! How passionately then would they roar out their requests?

[O that we might once see the days of Hope, and Means, and Mercy, which once we saw, and would not see! O that we had these days to spend in penitential tears and prayers, and holy preparations for an endless life, which we spent at cards, in needless recreations, in idle talk, in humouring others, in the pleasing of our flesh, or in the inordinate cares and businesses of the world! O that our youthful vigor might return! that our years might be renewed? that the days we spent in vanity might be recalled! that Ministers might again be sent to us publickly and privately, with the

message of grace which we once made light of ! that the Sun would once more shine upon us ! and patience and mercy would once more re-assume their work ! ]

If cries or tears, or price or pains, would bring back lost-abused Time, how happy were the now-distracted, dreaming, dead-hearted, and impenitent world ! If it would then serve their turn to say to the vigilant believers [ Give us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out, ] or to cry, [ Lord, Lord, open to us ] when the door is shut, the foolish would be saved as well as the wise, Mat. 25. 8, 10, 11. But this is the day of salvation ! this is the accepted Time, 2 Cor. 6. 2. While it is called To day, hearken, and harden not your hearts, Psal. 95. 8. Awake thou that sleepest, and stand up from thy sloathful wilful death, and use the light that's afforded thee by Christ, Epbes. 5. 14. or else the everlasting utter darkness, will shortly end thy Time and Hope.

2. And as Time can never be recalled,

recalled, so Life shall never be here  
 restored, Job 14. 14. [ If a man die,  
 shall he live ( here ) again? *All the  
 days of our appointed time we must  
 therefore wait ( in faith and diligence )  
 till our change shall come. ] One Life*  
 is appointed us on earth, to dispatch  
 the work that our everlasting life de-  
 pendeth on: And we shall have but  
*One.* Lose that and all is lost for ever:  
 Yet you may hear, and read, and learn,  
 and pray: but when *this* Life is end-  
 ed, it shall be so no more. You shall  
 rise from the Dead, indced to judge-  
 ment, and to the Life that now you  
 are preparing for: but never to such a  
 life as *this on earth*: your life is as the  
 fighting of a Battel, that must be  
 won or lost at once. There is no  
 coming hither again to mend what is  
 done amiss. Overights must be pre-  
 sently corrected by Repentance, or else  
 they are everlastingly past remedy.  
 Now if you be not truly converted,  
 you may be: If you find that you are  
 carnal and miserable, you may be  
 healed:

nealed : If you are unpardoned , you  
 may be pardoned : If you are Ene-  
 mies , you may be reconciled to  
 God : But when once the thred of  
 life is cut, your opportunities are at  
 an end. Now you may enquire of  
 your friends and Teachers , what  
 a poor soul must do that he may  
 be saved, and you may receive parti-  
 cular instructions and exhortations,  
 and God may bless them to the illu-  
 minating , renewing and saving of  
 your souls : But when life is past ,  
 it will be so no more. O then,  
 if desperate souls might but return,  
 and *once more* be tried with the  
 means of life, what joyful tidings  
 would it be ! How welcome would  
 the messenger be that bringeth it !  
 Had *Hell* but such an offer as this ,  
 and would *any* cries procure it from  
 their righteous Judge , O what a  
 change would be among them ! How  
 importunately would they cry to God,  
 [ O send us once again unto the  
 Earth ? Once more let us see the face  
 of



of Mercy, and hear the tenders of Christ and of salvation? Once more let the Ministers offer us their helps, and teach us in season and out of season, in publick and in private, and we will refuse their help and exhortations no more: we will hate them, and drive them away from our houses and Towns no more: Once more let us have thy Word, and Ordinances, and try whether we will not believe them, and use them better than we did. Once more let us have the help and company of thy Saints, and we will scorn them, and abuse them, and persecute them no more. O for the great unvaluable Mercy of such a life as once we had! O Try us once more with such a life, and see whether we will not contemn the world, and close with Christ, and live as strictly, and pray as earnestly, as those that we hated and abused for so doing: O that we might once more be admitted into the holy Assemblies, and have the Lords  
Days

Days to spend in the business of our salvation ! We would plead no more against the power and purity of the Ordinances ; We would no more call that day a burthen, nor hate them that spent it in works of Holiness, nor plead for the liberty of the flesh therein.

It makes my heart even shake within me, to think with what cries those damned souls would strive with God, and how they would roar out [ *O try us once again,* ] if they had but the least encouragement of *Hope* ! But *it will not be*, *It must not be* ! They had their Day, and would not know it : They cannot lose their Time and have it. They had faithful Guides, and would not follow them : Teachers they had, but would not learn. The dust of their feet must witness against them ; because their entertained obeyed message, cannot witness for them. Long did Christ wait with the patient tenders of his blood and spirit ; His Grace was

was long and earnestly offered them, but could not be regarded and received : And they cannot finally refuse a Christ, and yet have a Christ ; or refuse his mercy, and yet be saved by it. He that would have *Lazarus* sent from the *dead* to *warn* his unbelieving *Brethren* on Earth, no doubt would have strongly purposed *himself* on a reformation, if he might *once more* have been tried : And how earnestly would he have beg'd for such a *Trial*, that beg'd so hard for a drop of water ? *Luke* 16. 24, 27, 28. But alas, such mouths must be stop't for ever with a [ *Remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things,* ] v. 25.

So that it is appointed for all men *once to die*, and after that the *judgement*, *Hebr.* 9. 27. But there's no return to earth again : The places of your abode, imployment and delight shall know you no more. You must see these faces of your friends, and converse in flesh with men no more !

*This*

*This world, these houses, that*  
 wealth and Honour, as to any frui-  
 tion, must be to you as if you had  
 never known them. You must as-  
 semble here but a little while! yet a  
 little longer, and we must preach,  
 and you must hear it no more for  
 ever. That therefore which you will  
 do, must *presently* be done, or it will  
 be too late. If ever you will Re-  
 pent and Believe, it must be *Now*.  
 If ever you will be converted and  
 sanctified, it must be *Now*. If ever  
 you will be pardoned and reconciled  
 to God, it must be *Now*. If ever you  
 will reign, it's now that you must  
 fight and conquer. O that you were  
 wise, that you understood this, and  
 that you would consider your lat-  
 ter end, *Dent. 32. 29*. And that you  
 would let those words sink down into  
 your hearts, which came from the  
 heart of the Redeemer, as was wit-  
 nessed by his tears, *Luke 19. 41, 42*.  
 [ If thou hadst known, even thou, at least  
 in this thy day, the things which belong  
 unto

unto thy peice. But now they are hid-  
den from thine eyes. ] And that these  
warnings may not be the less re-  
garded, because you have so often  
heard them, when often hearing in-  
crease th your obligation, and diminish  
eth not the truth, or your dan-  
ger.

3. And as there is no Return to  
Earth, so is there no doing this work  
hereafter. Heaven and Hell are for  
other work. If the Infant be dead born,  
the open world will not revive him;  
That which is generated, and born a  
beast, or serpent, will not by all the  
influences of the Heavens, or all  
the powers of Sun or Earth, become  
a Man. The second and third con-  
coction presuppose the first. The har-  
vest doth presuppose the seed time,  
and the labour of the husbandman.  
It's now that you must sow, and here-  
after that you must reap. It's now  
that you must work, and then that  
you must receive your wages.

Is this believed and considered by the sleepy world? Alas sirs, do you live as men that must live here no more? Do you work as men that must work no more, and pray as men that must pray no more, when once the Time of work is ended? What thinkest thou poor besotted sinner! will God command *the Sun to stand still*, while thou rebellest or forgettest *thy work and him*? Dost thou look he should pervert the course of *nature*, and continue the Spring and Seed-time till thou hast a *mind to sow*? or that he will return the dead-born or mishapen Infant into the womb, that it may be better formed or quickened? Will he renew thy age, and make thee young again, and call back the hours that thou prodigally wastedst on thy lusts and idleness? Canst thou look for this at the hand of God, when Nature and Scripture assure thee of the contrary? If not, why hast thou not yet done with thy beloved sins?

Why

Why hast thou not yet begun to live? Why sittest thou still while thy soul is unrenewed, and all thy preparation for death and judgement is yet to make? How fain would Satan find thee thus at death? How fain would he have leave to blow out thy candle, before thou hast entered into the way of life? Dost thou look to have Preachers sent after thee, to bring thee the mercy which thy contempt here left behind? Wilt thou hear and be converted in the Grave and Hell? or wilt thou be saved without holiness? that is, In despite of God that hath resolved, it *shall not be.* O ye sons of sleep, of death, of darkness, awake, and live, and hear the Lord, before the Grave and Hell have shut their mouths upon you! Hear now, lest hearing be too late! Hear now, if you will ever hear. Hear now, if you have ears to hear! And O ye sons of Light, that see what sleeping sinners see not, call to them, and ring them such a peal of lamenta-

lamenta

lamentations, tears, and compassionate intreaties, as is suited to such a dead and dolefull state; Who knows but God may bless it to awake them?

If any of you be so far awakened, as to ask me what I am calling you to do, My Text tells you in general, **Up and be Doing**: Look about you, and see what you have to do, and Do it with your might.

1. **[Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do]** That is, whatsoever is a Duty imposed by the Lord, whatsoever is a Means conducing to thy own or others welfare; Whatsoever Necessity calleth thee to do, and Opportunity alloweth thee to do.

**[Thy hand findeth]** that is, Thy executive powers by the conduct of thy understanding, is now to do.

**[Do it with thy might]**: Do thy best in it. 1. **Trifle not**, but do it presently, without unnecessary Delay. 2. **Do it Resolutely**: Remain not doubtful, unresolved, in suspense, as if it were



were yet a *question* with thee whether thou shouldst do it, or not.

3. Do it with thy most *awakened affections*, and serious intention of the powers of thy soul. *Sleepiness* and *insensibility* are most unsuitable to such works. It is a *peculiar people zealous of good works*, that Christ hath purchased to himself, *Tit. 2. 14.*

4. Do it with all *necessary forecast* and contrivance : Not with a *distracting hindering Care* ; but with such a Care as may shew that you despise not your Master, and are not regardless of his work : And with such a care as is suited to the difficulties and nature of the thing, and is necessary to the due accomplishment.

5. Do it not sloathfully, but vigorously and with diligence. Stick not at thy labour : Lest thou hear [ *Thou wicked and sloathfull servant*, Mat. 25. 26. *Hide not thy hand in thy bosom with the sloathfull*, and say no

*Thy*

There is a Lion in the way, Prov. 26. 13, 14. The negligent and the vicious, the waster and the sloathfull, differ but as one brother from another, Prov. 18. 9. As the self-murder of the wilfully ungodly, so also the desire of the sloathfull killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour, Prov. 21. 25. The soul of the slaggard desireth and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat, Pro. 13. 4. Be not sloathfull in business, but be fervent in spirit serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 11.

6. Do it with Constancy, and not with destructive pauses and intermissions, or with weariness and turning back. The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that is of clean hands shall be stronger and stronger, Job. 17. 9. Be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58. Be not weary of well-doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not, Gal.

Gal. 6. 9. These six particulars are necessary, if you will observe the precept in my Text.

But that misunderstanding hinder not the performance, I shall acquaint you further with the sense, by these few explicatory cautions.

1. The *Might* and *Diligence* here required, excludeth not the necessity of *Deliberation* and *Prudent* conduct. Otherwise, the *faster* you go, the *further* you may go out of the way; and misguided zeal may spoil all the work, and make it but an injury to others or your selves. A little imprudence in the season, and order, and manner of a duty, sometimes may spoil it, and hinder the success, and make it do more hurt than good. How many a Sermon, or Prayer, or reproof, is made the matter of derision and contempt; for some imprudent passages or deportment? God sendeth not his servants to be jesters of the world, or to play the *mad men* as *David* in his fears: we must be  
wise

*wise and innocent*, as well as *resolute*  
 and *valiant*: Though *fleshly and world-*  
*ly wisdom* be not *desireable*, as being  
 but *foolishness* with God; yet the  
*wisdom which is from above*, and is *first*  
*pure*, and then *peaceable*, and is ac-  
 quainted with the high and hidden  
 mysteries, and is *justified of her chil-*  
*dren*, must be the *Guide* of all our ho-  
 ly actions. Holiness is not *blind*: Il-  
 lumination is the first part of Sancti-  
 fication. Believers are *Children of*  
*the Light*. Nothing requireth so  
 much *wisdom* as the matters of God,  
 and of our salvation. Folly is most  
 unsuitable to such excellent employ-  
 ments, and most unbeseeming the  
 sons of the most High. It is a *spirit*  
*of wisdom* that animateth all the  
 Saints, 1 Cor. 3. 19. & 2. 6, 7. Eph.  
 1. 8, 17. Col. 3. 16. It is the *treasures*  
*of wisdom* that dwell in Christ, and  
 are communicated to his members,  
 Col. 2. 3. We must *walk in wisdom*  
*toward them that are without*, Col.  
 4. 5. And our *works* must be *shewn*

out of a good conversation, with meekness of wisdom, Jam. 3. 13. Yet I must needs say, that its more in great things than in small, in the substance than the circumstances; in a sound judgement and estimate of things, and suitable choice and prosecution, than in fine expressions or deportment answering proud mens expectations.

2. Though you must work with your Might, yet with a diversity agreeable to the quality of your several works. Some works must be preferred before others: All cannot be done at once. That's a sin out of season, which in season is a duty. The Greatest, and the most urgent work must be preferred. And some works must be done with double fervour and resolution, and some with less. Buying, and selling, and marrying, and possessing, and using the world, must be done with a fear of overdoing, and in a sort as if we did them not, though they also must have a necessary diligence,

gence, 1 *Corinth.* 7. 29, 30, 31. *Gods Kingdom* and it's *Righteousness* must be first sought, *Mat.* 6. 33. And our labour for the meat that perisheth, must be comparatively as none, *Joh.* 6. 27.

3. Lastly, it is not an irregular, nor a self-disturbing, vexatious violence that is required of us: but a sweet well-settled resolution, and a delightful expeditious diligence, that makes the wheels go merrily on, and the more easily get over those rubs and difficulties, that clog and stop a sloathful soul.

And now will you lend me the assistance of your Consciences, for the transcribing of this command of God upon your hearts, and taking out a Copy of this order, for the regulating of your lives? [*Whatsoever*] is not a word so comprehensive as to include any vanity or sin; but so comprehensive as to include all your Duty.

1. ( To begin with the lowest : the very works of your bodily callings must have diligence. In the sweat of your brows you must eat your bread, Gen. 3. 19. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do, Exod. 20. 9. He that will not work, let him not eat, 2 Thess. 3. 10. Disorderly walkers, busie-bodies, that will not work with quietness, and eat their own bread, are to be avoided and shamed by the Church, 2 Thess. 3. 6, 11, 12, 14. Lazy servants are unfaithful to men, and disobedient to God, who commandeth them to obey their Masters according to the flesh ( unbelieving, ungodly Masters ) in all things ( that concerns their service ) and that not with eye service as man-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, and in the fear of God, doing whatsoever they do as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord (even for this) they shall receive the reward of the inheritance, Col. 3. 22, 23, 24. But he that doth wrong (by sloathfulness, or unfaithful-

ness) shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, verse 25.

*Success* is Gods ordinary temporal reward of *diligence*, Prov. 10. 4. and 12. 24, 27. And diseases, poverty, shame, disappointment, or self-tormenting melancholy, are his usual punishments of sloath. *Hard labor* redeemeth *Time*: you will have the more to lay out on greater works: The sloathful is still behind hand, and therefore must leave much of his work undone.

2. Are you *Parents* or *Governors* of *Families*! you have work to do for God, and for your *Childrens* and *servants* souls: Do it with your might: Deal wisely, but seriously and frequently with them about their sin, their duty, and their hopes of heaven; Tell them *whither* they are going, and *which* way they must go: Make them understand that they have a *higher Father* and *Master* that must be first served, and *greater* work to do than *yours*. Waken them from their natural



*ral insensibility and sloth : Turn not all your family duties into lifeless customary forms ( whether extemporate, or by rote ) speak about God, and Heaven, and Hell, and Holiness, with that seriousness as becoms men that believe what they say, and would have those they speak to, to believe it. Talk not either drowsily, or lightly, or jeastringly of such dreadful, or joyful, unexpressible things. Remember, that your families and you, are going to the grave, and to the world where there is no more room for your exhortations. There is no Catechising, examining, or serious instructing them in the grave whither they and you are going. It must be now or never : And therefore do it with your might. The words of God must be in your hearts, and you must diligently teach them to your children, talking of them when you sit in your houses, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up, Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8. and 11. 18, 19, 20.*

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3. Have you *ignorant* or *ungodly neighbours*, whose misery calls for your compassion, and relief? Speak to them and help them with *prudent diligence*. Lose not your opportunities: Stay not till *Death* hath stopt your *months*, or stopt their *ears*. Stay not till they are out of Hearing, and taken from your converse. Stay not till they are in *Hell*, before you warn them *of it*, or till Heaven be lost, before you have seriously called to them to remember it. Go to their houses: take all opportunities: stoop to their infirmities: bear with unthankful frowardness: It is for *mens salvation*: Remember there is no place for your instructions or exhortations in the *Grave* or *Hell*. Your *dust* cannot speak, and *their dust* cannot hear: Up therefore and be doing with all your might.

4. Hath God intrusted you with the *Riches of this world*; with *many talents* or with *few*, by which he looketh you should relieve the needy, and especially

especially should promote those works  
 of piety which are the greatest char-  
 ity ? Give ( prudently, but willingly  
 and liberally ) while you have to give.  
 It is your Gain : The time of mar-  
 ket for your souls ; and of laying up  
 a treasure in Heaven , and setting  
 your money to the most gainful  
 Usury ; and of making you friends of  
 the mammon of unrighteousness ; and  
 furthering your salvation , by that  
 which bindeth other mens , and  
 occasioneth their perdition . [ As  
 you have opportunity , do good to all  
 men , but especially to them of the house-  
 hold of faith ] Gal. 6. 6, 7, 8, 9, 12.  
 [ Cast thy bread upon the waters ; for  
 thou shalt find it after many days . Give  
 a portion to seven and to eight ; for thou  
 knowest not what evil may be upon the  
 earth ] Eccles. 11. 1, 2. [ In the morn-  
 ing sow thy seed , and in the evening  
 withhold not thy hand : for thou know-  
 est not whether shall prosper, this or that,  
 or whether they both shall be alike good ]  
 v. 6. [ Withhold not good from them to  
 whom

whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it : Say not to thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee, ] Prov. 3. 27, 28. Lay up a foundation for the time to come : Do good before thy heart be hardened, thy riches blasted and consumed, thy opportunities taken away ; part with it before it part with thee. Remember it, must be Now or Never : There is no working in the Grave.

5. Hath God intrusted you with Power or Interest, by which you may promote his honour in the world, and relieve the oppressed, and restrain the rage of impious malice ! Hath he made you *Governors*, and put the Sword of Justice into your hands ? up then and be doing with your might. Defend the innocent, protect the servants of the Lord, cherish them that do well, be a terror to the wicked, encourage the strictest obedience to the universal Governor, discon-

discountenance the breakers of his  
 Laws : Look not to be reverenced or  
 obeyed *before him*, or more carefully  
 than he : Openly maintain his Truth  
 and worship without fear or shame :  
 Deal gently and tenderly with his  
 lambs and little ones : Search after  
 vice that you may successfully sup-  
 press it. Hate those temptations that  
 would draw you to man-pleasing,  
 temporizing, remissness, or coun-  
 tenancing sin ; but especially those  
 that would ensnare you in a *contro-*  
*versie with Heaven*, and in quarrels  
 against the *ways of Holiness*, or in that  
 self-confounding sin of abusing and  
 opposing the people that are most  
 careful to please the Lord. Your trust  
 is great, and so is your advantage to  
 do good ; And how great will be  
 your account, and how dreadful, if  
 you be unfaithful ? As you *signi-*  
*fie* more than hundreds or thousands of  
 the meaner sort, and your actions do  
*most good or hurt* ; so you must expect  
 to be accordingly *dealt with*, when

you come to the impartial, final judgement. Befriend the Gospel as the Charter of your everlasting privileges ; own those that Christ hath told you he will own. Use them as men that are ready to hear [ *Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my Brethren, you did it unto me* ] Mat. 25. Know not a wicked person : but let your eyes be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell therein, and lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty, Psal. 101. 1. Tim. 2. 2. [ *Let those that work the work of the Lord, be with you without fear* ] 1 Cor. 16. 10. Remember that it is the Character of a Pharisee and Hypocrite, to see the mote of the non-observance of a ceremony, or tradition, or smaller matter of difference in Religion in their Brothers eye, and not to see the beam of hypocrisie, injustice and malicious cruel opposition of Christ and his Disciples in their own eyes : And that it's the brand of them that please not God, that are filling up their sins,

on



on whom Gods wrath is coming to the utmost, to persecute the servants of the Lord, forbidding them to Preach to the people that they might be saved, 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16.

Learn well the second, and the hundred and first Psalm: And write these sentences on your walls and doors, as an Antidote against that self undoing sin: Matth. 18. 6. *Who-soever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.* ] Zach. 2. 8. [ *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.* ] Rom. 14. 13, 2. and 15. 1. [ *Him that is weak in the faith, receive you; but not to doubtful disputations.* — For God hath received him. ] Mat. 10. 40, 41, 42. [ *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous mans reward:*

ward : And whoso shall give to drink to one of these little ones , a cup of cold water only in the name of a Disciple , Verily I say unto you , he shall in no wise lose his reward . ] If you love not the Godly , love yourselves ( so far as to such self-love is possible ) wound not your own hearts , to make their fingers bleed . Damn not your souls ( and that by the surest , nearest way ) that you may hurt their bodies . Provoke not God to thrust you from his presence , and deny your suits , by your dealing so with them : stop not your own mouthes , when your misery will bespeak your loudest cries for mercy , by your stopping the mouthes of the servants of the Lord , and refusing to hear their requests for Justice . If you have the Serpents — enmity against the womans seed , you must expect the Serpents doom : Your heads will be bruised , when you have bruised their heels , Genes. 3. 15. Kick not against the pricks , Acts 9. Let not bryers and thorns set themselves in battel

*buttel against the L rd , lest he go therefore through them , and burn them together , Isa. 27. 4.*

I speak not any of this by way of *accusation* or *dishonorable reflection* on the *Magistrate*. Blessed be God that hath given us the comfort of *your defence*. But knowing what the *Tempter* aimeth at , and where it is that your danger lieth , and by what means the *Rulers* of the earth have been undone , faithfulness commandeth me to tell you of the *snare* , and to set before you *good* and *evil* , as ever I would escape the guilt of betraying you by flattery , or cruel and cowardly silence.

And especially when your *Magistracy* is but *annual* , or for a *short time* , it concerneth you to be *doing with your might*. It is but *this year* , or short space of time , that you have to do this special service in ; Lose *this* and lose *all*. By what men on earth should God be eminently served and honored , if not by *Magistrates* , whom  
he

he hath eminently advanced, impowred and intrusted? With considerate foresight, seriously ask your selves the question, Are you willing to hear, at the day of your accounts, that you had but *one year*, or a *few*, to do God *special service* in, and that you *knew this*, and yet *would not* do it? Can your hearts bear it then, to hear and think, that you *lost*, and *wilfully lost* such an opportunity? Look about you then, and see what is to be done. Are there not *Ale-bouses* to be suppressed, and *drunkards* and riotous persons to be restrained; Preaching and Piety to be promoted? Do it with your *Might*: For it must be *Now or Never*.

6. To come yet a little nearer you, and speak of the work that is yet to be done in your *own souls*; Are any of you yet in the state of *unrenewed nature*, born *only of the flesh*, and not of the *Spirit*, Joh. 3. 3, 5, 6. *Minding the things of the flesh*, and not the things of the *Spirit*? Rom. 8. 1, 5, 7,

9, 13. and consequently yet in the power of Satan, taken captive by him at his will, Acts 26. 18. 2 Tim. 2. 26, 27. Up and be doing, if thou love thy soul. If thou care whether thou be in Joy or Misery for ever, bewail thy sin and spiritual distress: Make out to Christ, cry mightily to him for his renewing and reconciling pardoning grace: Plead his satisfaction, his merits and his promises; Away with thy rebellion, and thy beloved sin; Deliver up thy soul entirely to Christ, to be sanctified, governed and saved by him. Make no more demurrs about it; it is not a matter to be questioned, or trifled in. Let the earth be acquainted with thy bended knees, and the air with thy complaints and cries, and men with thy confessions and enquiries after the way of life; and heaven with thy sorrows, desires and resolutions, till thy soul be acquainted with the Spirit of Christ, (Rom. 8. 9.) and with the new, the holy and heavenly nature: and

and thy heart have received the transcript of Gods Law, the impress of the Gospel, and so the Image of thy Creator and Redeemer. Ply this work with all thy might: For there is no Conversion, Renovation, or Repentance unto life, in the Grave whither thou goest. It must be Now or Never, And Never saved, if Never sanctified, Heb. 12. 14.

7. Hast thou any prevailing sin to mortifie, that either reigneth in thee, or woundeth thee and keepeth thy soul in darkness and unacquaintedness with God? Assault it resolutely: Reject it speedily: Abhor the motions of it: Turn away from the persons or things that would entice thee. Hate the doors of the Harlot, and of the Alehouse, or the gaming house: and go not as the Ox to the slaughter, and as a bird to the fowlers snare, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks, as if thou knewest not that it is for thy life, &c.] Prov. 7. 22, 23. Why thou befooled stupid soul! wilt thou  
be

be *tasting* of the poysoned cup? wilt thou be *sporting* thee with the bait? Hast thou *no where* to walk or play thee, but at the brink of hell? Must *not the flesh* be crucified with its *affections and lusts*? Gal. 5. 24. Must it not be *tamed and mortified*, or thy soul condemned? Rom. 8. 13. 1 Cor. 9. 27. Run *not therefore as at uncertainty*: fight *not as one that beats the air*, ver. 26. seeing this *must* be done, or thou art undone, delay and dally with sin no longer: Let this be the day; resolve; and resist it with thy might: It must be *Now or Never*: when death comes, it is too late. There will be then no reward to leave sin, which thou canst keep no longer: No part of Holiness or Happiness, that thou art not drunk, or proud, or lustful in the grave or hell. As thou art wise therefore, *know and prize thy Time*.

8. Art thou in a *declined* *lapsed* state? decayed in grace? Hast thou lost thy first desires and love? do thy

thy first works, and do them with thy might. Delay not, but remember from whence thou art fallen, and what thou hast lost by it, and into how sad a case thy folly and negligence hath brought thee: say, *I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now*, Hos 2. 7. Cry out with Job 29. 2, 3, 4, 5. [O that I were as in months past! as in the days when God preserved me! when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness. As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was on my Tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me. — ] Return while thou hast day, lest the night surprize thee: Loyer and delay no more; thou hast lost by it already: thou art far behind hand. — Bestir thee therefore with all thy might.

9. Art thou in the darkness of uncertainty concerning thy conversion, and thy everlasting state? Dost thou not know whether thou be in a state  
of



of life or death ? and what should  
 become of thee, if *this were the day*  
 or *hour* of thy change ? If thou art  
*careful about it*, and *enquirest*, and  
*usest the means* that God hath appoint-  
 ed thee for assurance : I have then  
 no more to say to thee now, but,  
*wait on God*, and thou shalt not be  
 disappointed or ashamed ! Thou shalt  
 have assurance in due time, or be sa-  
 ved before thou wouldst believe thou  
 shouldst be saved. Be patient and  
 obedient, and the light of Christ  
 will shine upon thee, and yet thou  
 shalt see the dayes of Peace. But if  
 thou art *careless* in thy *uncertainty*,  
 and mindest not so great a business,  
 be awakened and call thy soul to it's  
 account ; search and examine thy  
 heart and life : Read, and consider,  
 and take advice of faithful guides.  
 Canst thou carelessly sleep, and laugh,  
 and sport, and follow thy lesser busi-  
 ness as if thy salvation were made  
 sure, when thou knowest not *where*  
 thou must dwell for ever ? examine  
 your

your selves whether you be in the faith ; prove your selves ; know ye not your own selves , that Christ is in you except you are reprobates ? 2 Cor. 13. 5. Give all diligence ( in time ) to make your calling and election sure , 2 Pet. 1. 10. In the Grave and Hell there is no making sure of Heaven : you are then past enquiries and self-examinations , in order to any recovery or hope. Another kind of tryal will finally resolve you. Up therefore and diligently ply the work : it must be *Now or Never*.

10. In all the duties of thy Profession of Piety, Justice, or Charity, to God, thy self, or others, up and be doing with thy might. Art thou seeking to enflame thy soul with love to God ? plunge thy self in the Ocean of his love ; admire his mercies ; gaze upon the representations of his transcendent goodness ; O taste and see that the Lord is gracious ! Remember that he must be Loved with all thy heart and soul and might ; canst thou  
pour

pour out thy love upon a creature, and give but a few barren drops to God?

When thou art *Fearing him*, let his Fear *command* thy soul, and conquer all the fear of man.

When thou art *Trusting him*, do it without distrust, and cast all thy care and thy self upon him: Trust him as a creature should trust his God, and the members of Christ should trust their Head and dear Redeemer.

When thou art making mention of his great and dreadful *name*, O do it with *Reverence*, and *awe*, and *admiration*: And *take not the name of God in vain*.

When thou art *Reading his Word*, let the Majesty of the Author, and the Greatness of the matter, and the Gravity of the style, possess thee with an obediential fear. Love it, and let it be sweeter to thee than the honey-comb, and preciouser than thousands of Gold and Silver. Re-  
solve

solve to do what there thou findest  
 to be the will of God. When thou  
 art *praying in secret*, or in thy fami-  
 ly, *Do it with thy might* : Cry mighti-  
 ly to God, as a soul under sin, and  
 wants, and danger, that is stepping  
 into an endless life, should do. Let  
 the reverence and the fervour of thy  
 prayers shew that it's *God himself* that  
 thou art speaking to : that it's *Hea-  
 ven it self* that thou art praying for ;  
*Hell it self* that thou art praying to  
 be saved from. Wilt thou be dull  
 and senseless on *such an errand* to the  
*Living God* ? Remember what lieth  
 upon thy *failing or prevailing* : and  
 that it must be *Now or Never*.

Art thou a *Preacher of the Gospel*,  
 and takest charge of the *souls of men* ?  
*Take heed to thy self and to the whole  
 flock*, over which the *Holy Ghost* hath  
 made thee an *Overseer*, to feed the  
*Church of God*, which he hath pur-  
 chased with his own blood. Let not  
 the blood of souls, and the blood that  
 purchased them, be required at thy  
 hands.

hands, Acts 20. 28. Ezek. 3. 18, 20.  
 Thou art charged before God, and the  
 Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the  
 quick and the dead at his appearing and  
 his Kingdom, that thou preach the word,  
 be instant in season and out of season; re-  
 prove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-  
 suffering and doctrine, 2. Tim. 4. 1, 2.  
 Teach every man, and exhort every man,  
 Col. 1. 28. Even night and day with  
 tears, Acts 20. 31. Save men with  
 fear, pulling them out of the fire, Jud.  
 Cry aloud: lift up thy voice like a trum-  
 pet: tell them of their transgressions,  
 Isa. 58. 1. Yet thou art alive, and  
 they alive: yet thou hast a tongue,  
 and they have ears: The final sen-  
 tence hath not yet cut off their hopes.  
 Preach therefore, and Preach with all  
 thy Might. Exhort them privately  
 and personally with all the seriousness  
 thou canst. Quickly, or it will be too  
 late. Prudently, or Satan will over-  
 reach thee: Feruently, or thy words  
 are like to be disregarded. Remem-  
 ber when thou lookest them in the  
 faces

faces, when thou beholdest the Assemblies; that They must be Converted or Condemned, Sanctified on Earth, or tormented in Hell; and that this is the Day: It must be Now or Never.

In a word, Apply this quickning precept to all the duties of the Christian course. Be Religious, and Just, and Charitable in good sadness, if you would be taken for such when you look for the reward. *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. 2. 12. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter and shall not be able, Mat. 7. 13. Luke 12. 24. Many run, but few receive the prize: so run that you may obtain, 1 Corinth. 9. 24. If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Pet. 4. 18. Let the doting world deride your diligence, and set themselves to hinder and afflict you: It will be but a little while before experience change their minds, and make them sing another song. Follow Christ fully:*  
 Ply

Ply your work, and lose no time. The Judge is coming. Let not words nor any thing that man can do, prevail with you to sit down, or stop you in a journey of such importance. Please God, though flesh, and friends, and all the world should be displeased. Whatever come of your Reputation, or Estates, or Liberties, or Lives, be sure you look to Life Eternal; and cast not that on any hazard, for a withering flower, or a pleasant dream, or a picture of commodity, or any vanity that the Deceiver can present. *For what shall it profit you to win the world and lose your soul? Mat. 16. 26.* Or to have been honoured and obeyed on Earth, when you are under the wrath of God in Hell? Or that your flesh was once provided with variety of delights, when it's turned to rottenness, and must be raised to torments? Hold on therefore in Faith, and Holiness, and Hope, though Earth and Hell should rage against you, though all the World.

D

by

hy force or flattery, should do the work they can to hinder you. This is your ~~war~~ : your *warfare*, is the *Resisting* of *deceit*, and of all that would tempt you to *Consent* to the means of your own destruction : *Consent not*, and you *conquer* : *Conquer*, and you are *Crowned*. The *combat* is all about your *Wills* ; *Yield*, and you have *lost the day*. If the prating of ungodly fools, or the contemptuous jeers of hardened sinners, or the frowns of unsanctified Superiours, could prevail against the Spirit of Christ, and the workings of an enlightened mind, then what man would be saved ? You *deserve* damnation, if you will run into it to avoid a *mock*, or the loss of any thing that man can take from you. You are unmeet for heaven, if you can part with it to save your purses. *Fear not them that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do : but fear him that can destroy both soul and body in Hell, Matthew 10. 28.*

Luke



Luke 12. 4, 5. Obey God, though all the world forbid you. No power can save you from his Justice: And none of them can deprive you of his Reward. Though you lose your *Heads*, you shall save your *Crowns*: You no way save your lives so certainly, as by such losing them, *Matt.* 10. 39. *One thing is necessary: Do that with speed, and care, and diligence, which Must be done, or you are lost for ever.* They that are now against your much and earnest praying, will shortly cry as loud themselves in vain; When it is too late, how fervently will they beg for mercy, that now deride you for valuing and seeking it in time! But then they shall call upon God, but he will not answer: they shall seek him early, but shall not find him: For that they hated know'edge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of his counsel, but despised all his reproof. ]  
 Prov. 1. 24. to the end.

Up therefore and work with all thy might. Let unbelievers trifle, that  
 D 2 know

know not that the righteous God stands over them, and know not that they are *now* to work for everlasting, and know that Heaven or Hell is at the end. Let them delay, and laugh, and play, and dream away their Time, that are drunk with prosperity, and mad with fleshly lusts and pleasures, and have lost their Reason in the cares, and delusions, and vain-glory of the world. But shall it be so with *thee* whose eyes are opened, who seest the God, the Heaven, the Hell, which they do *but bear of* as unlikely things? Wilt thou *live awake*, as they that are asleep? Wilt thou do in the *day-light*, as they do in the *dark*? shall *Freemen* live as *Satans-slaves*? shall the *Liv- ing* lie as *still* and useles as the *dead*? Work then while it is day; for the night is coming when none can work,  
*John 9. 4.*

It is not the works of the Mosar- cal Law, nor works that are con- ceited for their proper value to deserve any

any things at the hands of God ; that I am all this while perswading you to : But it is the works prescribed you by Christ in the Gospel according to which you shall be shortly judged to joy or misery , by Christ himself , that will call you to account. These must be done with all your *Might*.

*Object.* But (you'll say perhaps) alas, *What Might have we? We have no sufficiency of our selves; without Christ we can do nothing! And this we find when it comes to the trial.*

*Ans.* 1. It is not a *Might* that is *Originally thine own*, that I am calling thee to exercise : but that which thou hast already received from God , and that which *he is ready to bestow*. Use well but all the *Might* thou hast , and thou shalt find thy labour is not vain. Even the strength of *Nature* , and of *common Grace* , are talents which thou must improve.

2. Art thou *willing* to use the *Might* thou hast , and to *have more* , and *use it if thou hadst it* ? If thou art ,

thou hast then the strength of Christ : Thou standest not , and workest not by thy own strength : his promise is engaged to thee , and his strength is sufficient for thee. But if thou art not *willing* , thou art without excuse ; when thou hadst heaven and hell set open in the Word of God to make thee *willing* , God will distinguish thy *wilfulness* from *unwilling weakness*.

3. There is more *Power* in all of you than you *use* , or than you are well aware of. It wanteth but *awakening* to bring it into act. Do you not find in your *Repentings* , that the change is more in *your Will* than in *your Power* ? and in the *awaking* of your *Will* and *Reason* into act , than in the addition of meer *abilities* ? and that therefore you besool your selves for your sins and your neglects , and wonder that you had no more use of your understandings ? Let but a storm at Sea , or violent sickness , or approaching death , rowse  
up

up and waken the powers which you have, and you will finde there was much more asleep in you than you used.

I shall therefore next endeavour to awaken your abilities, or tell you how you should awaken them.

When your souls are drowfie, and you are forgetting your God, and your latter end, and matters of Eternity have little force and savour with you; when you grow lazie and superficial, and Religion seems a lifeless thing; and you do your duty as if it were in vain, or against your wills, when you can lose your time, and delay repentance, and friends, and profit, and reputation, and pleasure can be heard against the Word of God, and take you off when you do all by the halves, and languish in your Christian course, as near to death; *Stir up your souls with the urgency of such Questions as these.*

Quest. 1. *Can I do no more than this for God?* Who gave me all? Who deserveth all? Who seeth me in my duties and my sins? When he puts me *purposely* on the trial, what I can do for his sake and service, *Can I do no more?* Can I love him no more? and obey, and watch, and work no more?

Quest. 2. *Can I do no more than this for Christ?* For him that did so much for me? that lived so exactly; obeyed so perfectly; walked so inoffensively and meekly; despising all the *bais*, and *honours*, and *riches* of the world? that loved me to the death; and offereth me freely all his benefits, and would bring me to eternal Glory? Are these careless, cold and dull endeavours my best return for all this Mercy?

† Quest. 3. *Can I do no more, when my salvation is the prize?* when Heaven or Hell depend much on it? when I know this before-hand, and may see in the glass of the holy Scriptures what  
what

what is prepared for the *Diligent* and the *Negligent*, and what work there is and will be for ever in Heaven and Hell on these accounts? Could I not do more, if my house were on fire, or my estate, or life, or friend in danger, than I do for my salvation?

Quest. 4. *Can I do no more for the souls of men?* When they are undone for ever if they be not speedily delivered? Is this my Love and compassion to my neighbour, my servant, friend or childe?

Quest. 5. *Can I do no more for the Church of God?* for the publick good? for the peace and welfare of the Nation and our posterity? in suppressing sin? in praying for deliverance? or in promoting works of publick benefit?

Quest. 6. *Can I do no more, that have laytered so long?* and go no faster, that have slept till the evening of my days, when *Diligence* must be the discovery of my Repentance?

Quest. 7. *Can I do no more, that know not now but I am doing my last? That see how fast my Time makes haste, and know I must be quickly gone? that know it must be Now or Never: and that this is all the time I shall have, on which an endless life dependeth?*

Quest. 8. *Can I do no better, when I know before hand, what different aspects Diligence and Negligence will have, to the awakened soul in the review? What a comfort it will be at death and judgement, to be able to say, I did my best, or loytered not away the time I had? And what a vexatious and heart-disquieting thing it will then be to look back on Time as irrecoverably lost, and on a life of tryal, as cast away upon imper-tinencies, while the work that we lived for lay undone? Shall I now by trifling prepare such griping and tormenting thoughts, for my awakened conscience?*

Quest. 9. *Can I do no more, when I am*



I am sure I cannot do too much; and am sure there is nothing else to be preferred? and that it's this I live for; and that life is for action; and disposeth thereunto; (and holy life for holy action) and that it's better *not live*, than not attain the ends of living; when I have so many and unwearied enemies; when sloth is my danger, and the advantage of my enemy; when I know that Resolution and Vigorous diligence, is so necessary that all is lost without it; will temptations be resisted, and self-denied, and concupiscence mortified, and fleshly desires tamed and subdued, and sin cast out, and a holy communion with heaven maintained with idleness and sloth? will families be well ordered, and Church; or City, or Countrey well governed? will the careless sinners that I am bound to help, be converted, and saved, with sitting still, and with some heartless cold ende yours?

Quest. 10. *Can I do no more that have so much help?* that have mercies of all sorts encouraging me, and creatures attending me; that have health to enable me, or affliction to remember and excite me, that have such a master, such a work, such a reward, as better cannot be desired; who is less excusable for neglect than I?

Quest. 11. *Could I do no more, if I were sure, that my salvation lay on this one duty?* that according to this prayer, it should go with me for ever; or if the soul of my child, or servant, or neighbour must speed for ever, as my endeavours speed with them now for their conversion? for ought I know it may be thus.

Quest. 12. *Would I have God to come with the spur and rod?* How do I complain when affliction is upon me? And will I neither endure it, nor be quickened without it? Is it not better mend my pace and work, on easier terms?

I would

I would not have distressed souls to use these considerations meerly to *disquiet* themselves for their *infirmities*, and so live in *heaviness* and *self-vexation*, because they cannot be as good as they desire, or do as much and as well as they should do: It is not despair that will mend the matter, but make it worse: But I would wish the lazy sloathful soul, to plead these Questions with it self, and try whether they have no quickening power, if closely urged, and seriously considered.

Believe it Sirs, it is the *deceitfulness* of *prosperity* that keeps up the *reputation* of a *sloathful* life, and makes *holy diligence* seem *unnecessary*. When affliction comes, awakened reason is ashamed of this, and seeth it as an odious thing.

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**B**Y this time you may see, what difference there is, between the judgement of God, and of the world; and

and what to think of the understandings of those men ( be they *high* or *low*, *learned* or *unlearned* ) that hate or oppose this *holy diligence*. God bids us *love*, and *seek*, and *serve* him, with all our *heart*, and *soul*, and *might* : And these men call them *Zealots*, and *Presicians*, and *Puritans*, that *endeavour* it ; though, alas, they fall exceeding short, when they have done their best. It is one of the most wonderful monstrosities and deformities that ever befel the nature of man, that *men*, that *learned men*, that men that in other things are *wise*, should *seriously* think that the utmost diligence to obey the Lord and save our souls, is *needless*, and that ever they should take it for a *crime*, and make it a matter of *reproach* : That the *serious*, *diligent obeying* of Gods *Laws*, should be the matter of the common disdain and hatred of the world ; that no men are more generally *abhorred*, and *tost up* and *down* by impatient men ; that great  
and

and small, the Rulers and the vulgar rabble, in *most places* of the earth cannot endure them: To think how the *first man* that ever was born into the world, did *hate his own brother* till he had proceeded to murder him, because he served God better than himself, [ *Because his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous,* ] 1 John 3. 12. And how *constantly* this horrid unnatural madness, hath succeeded and raged in the world from *Cain* until this day! It is not in vain that the Holy Ghost addeth, in the next words, 1 John 3. 13. [ *Marvel not my brethren, if the world hate you* ] implying that we are apt to *marvel at it*, as I confess I have oft and *greatly* done. Methinks, it is so wonderful a *plague* and *stain* in Nature, that it doth very much to confirm me of the truth of Scripture, of the Doctrine of mans fall; and original sin, and the necessity of a Reconciler, and of renewing grace.

Distracted, miserable souls! Is it not enough for you to refuse your *own salvation*, but you must be angry with all that will not imitate you! Is it not mad enough, and bad enough to *choose* damnation, but you must be offended with all that are not of your mind! If *you* will not believe God, that without Regeneration, Conversion, holiness, and a heavenly, Spiritual life, there is no salvation to be hoped for ( *John* 3. 3, 5, 6. *Matth.* 18. 3. *Hebr.* 12. 14. *R. m.* 8. 9, 13. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17.) must we all be *unbelievers* with you? If you will laugh at hell till you are in it, must we do so too? If God and glory seem less worth to you, than your *fleshy pleasure for a time*, must we renounce our Christianity, and our Reason for fear of differing from *you*? If *you* *dare* differ from your Maker, and the Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost, and all the Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists, and all that ever came to Heaven, might not we be bold to differ from *you*?

If

If *you* will needs be ungodly, and choose your everlasting wo, be patient with them that have more understanding, and dare not be so hardy, as to leap *after you* into the unquenchable fire: *Mock not at holiness* if you have no mind of it. *Hinder not* them that strive to enter in at the strait gate, if you refuse yourselves. Be not so desirous of company in hell. It will prove no comfort to you, or abatement of your pain.

But because you have the faces to contradict the God of truth, and to reproach that work which he commandeth, and to say, *What needs so much ado?* when he bids us *do it with all our might*; I will briefly tell you what you are doing, and shew you the ugly face of the scorner, and the filthy hearts of the enemies of holiness, that if it may be, you may loath yourselves.

I. These

1. *These enemies of Holy diligence, deny God with their works and lives, and are practical Atheists; and it seems are so near of kin to [that wicked one,] (see 1 John 3. 12.) that they would have all others to do so too. And then how soon would earth be turned into hell! The case is plain: If God deserve not to be loved and served with all thy heart, and soul, and might, he is not God. And if thy wealth, or honor, or flesh, or friend deserveth more of thy love, and care, and diligence than God, then that is thy God that deserveth best. See now what these deriders of purity and obedience do think of God, and of the world.*

2. *These Cainites do blaspheme the Governor of the world: When he hath given Laws to the Creatures that he made of nothing, these wretches deride and hate men for obeying them. If God have not commanded that which you oppose; contradict it, and spare not: I would you were*



were much more against that pretended Religion which he commandeth not. But if he have commanded it, and yet you dare revile them as too Pure and Precise that would obey it, what do you but charge the King of Saints with making Laws that are not to be obeyed? which must needs imply that they are Foolish, or Bad, though made by the most Wise and Good.

3. These Enemies of H-liness oppose the practice of the very first principles of all Religion. For Heb. 11:6. [ He that cometh to God, must believe that God is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. ] And it's diligent seeking him that they hate and set themselves against.

4. Do not they judge Heaven to be less worth than Earth; when they will do less for it, and would have others to do so too?

5. They would have us all unchristen and unmin in our selves, as if there were no life to come; as if our Reason and all our Faculties were given us

in

*in vain.* For if they are not given us for greater matters than all the honors and pleasures of the world, they are *in vain*, or *worse*; and the life of man is but a dream and misery. Were not a beast less miserable, if this were all?

6. *How base a price do these Cninites set on the immoral soul of man*, that think it not worth *so much ado*, as the careful obedience of the Laws of Christ? Nor worth so much as they do themselves for their filthy sins and perishing flesh? But would have us so mad as to sell heaven and our souls for a little sinful sloath and ease.

7. *These Enemies of holiness would have men take their Mercies for their Hurt*, and their greatest blessings for a burthen or a plague, and to run in to hell to be delivered from them. Why man, dost thou know what Holiness is? and what it is to have access to God? I tell thee it is the foretaste of heaven on earth. It is the highest Glory, and sweetest delight, and chiefest

hiefest commodity to the soul. And art thou afraid of having *too much* of this? What, *thou that haste none* (which should make thee tremble) art thou afraid of having *too much*? Thou that never *fearest too much money*, nor *too much honor*, nor *too much health*, art thou afraid of *too much spiritual health and holiness*? What shall be thy desire, if thou loath and fly from thy felicity?

8. You that are loyal subjects, take heed of these ungodly scorners: For by consequence *they would tempt you to despise your King, and make a mock at the obeying of his Commands and Laws.* If a man perswade you to despise *Judge*, he implieth that you may despise a *Constable*. No King is so great in comparison of God, as a fly or worm is to that King. He therefore that would relax the Laws of God, and make it seem a *needless thing* to obey him *diligently and exactly*, implieth that obedience to any of the sons of men is *much more needless*.

And

And you that are children or servants, take heed of the Doctrine of these men : *Masters*, admit it not into your *families*. If he be worthy to be scorned as a *Puritan* or *Precisian*, that is careful to please and obey the Lord, what scorn do your children and servants deserve, if *they* will be obedient and pleasing to *such as you*?

9. All you that are poor Tradesmen, take heed of the *consequences of the Cainites scorns*, lest it make you give over the labours of your calling, and turn your selves and families into beggery. For if *Heaven* be not worth your *greatest labour*, your *bodies* are not worth the least.

10. *These Cainites speak against the awakened Consciences, and the confessions of all the world.* Whatsoever they may say in the dream of their blind presumption and security, at last, when Death hath opened their eyes, they all cry, O that we had been Saints! O that we might die the death of the righteous, and that our  
last

last end might be as his ! O that we had spent that Time , and Care , and Labour for our souls , which we spent on that which now is gall to our remembrance ! And yet these men will take no warning, but now oppose and deride that course that all the world do wish at last they had been as zealous for as any.

11. *The enemy himself hath a conscience within him*, that either grudgeth against his malicious impiety, and witnesseth that he abuseth them that are far better than himself, or at least will shortly call him to a reckoning, and tell him better what he did, and make him change his face and tune, and wish himself in the case of those that did oppose.

12. To conclude, the *Cainite* is of that wicked one, 1 John 3. 12. of his father the Devil, Joh. 8. 42, 44. and is his walking, speaking instrument on Earth, saying what he himself would say : He is the open enemy of God. For who are his enemies, but the enemies of Holiness,

*Holiness*, of his *Laws*, of our *Obedience*, of his *Image*, and of his *Saints*? And how will Christ deal at last with his *Enemies*? Luke 19. 27. O that they knew, that foreseeing, they might escape! This is the *true*, the *ugly* picture of a *Cainite*, or *Enemy* of a *holy life*, that reproacheth *serious diligence* as a *precise* and *needless thing*, when God commandeth us, and *Death*, and the *Grave*, and *Eternity* admonish us to do his work with all our might. Now consider this ye that forget God, lest he *tear you in pieces*, and there be none to deliver you, Psal. 50. 22.

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**B**ut of all the opposers of *serious Holiness* in the world, there are none more unexcusable and deplorably miserable, than those that profess themselves *Ministers of Christ*. Would one believe that had not known them, that there are such men in the world? Alas, there are too many. Though  
Edu.

cation, and the Laws of the Land engage them to preach *true Doctrine*, yet are they *false Teachers* in the *Application*. For they never well learned the holy and heavenly Doctrine which they preach, nor digested it, or received the power and impress of it upon their hearts; and therefore retaining their natural corruptions, impiety and enmity to the Life, and Power, and Practice of that Doctrine, they *indirectly* destroy what directly they would seem to build; and preach both for God, and against him, for Christ and the Holy Spirit, and against them, for godliness, and against it, both in the same Sermon. In general, they must needs speak for the word of God, and a holy life; But when they come to the *particulars*, they secretly reproach it, and condemn the *parts*, while they commend the whole. In general they speak well of religious, godly, holy people; but when they *meet* with them, they hate them, and make them *Precisi-*

ans, a Sect that is every where spoken against, pestilent fellows, and movers of sedition, as the Apostles were accused, Acts 24. 5. and 28. 22. and any thing that malice can invent to make them odious: And what they cannot prove, they will closely intimate, in the false application of their Doctrines, describing them so as may induce the hearers to believe that they are a company of self-conceited Hypocrites, factious, proud, disobedient, turbulent, peevish, affecting singularity, desiring to ingross the reputation of Godliness to themselves, but secretly as bad as others. And when they have thus represented them to the ignorant sort of people, they have made the way of Godliness odious, and sufficiently furnished miserable souls with prejudice and dislike; so that because the persons are thus made hateful to them, all serious diligence for Heaven, all tenderness of Conscience, and fear of sinning, all heavenly discourse, and serious preaching,



preaching, reading, or praying, are  
 also made odious for their sakes.  
 For hearing so ill of the persons, and  
*seeing that these are the things* wherein  
 they differ from others, they reduce  
 their judgement of their *practices* to  
 their fore-settled judgement of the per-  
 sons. When their diligence in their fa-  
 milies, in prayer and instructions, in  
 reading, and fruitful improvement of  
 the Lords day, or any other acti-  
 ons of strictness and holy industry are  
 mentioned, these ungodly Ministers  
 are ready to blot them with some  
 open calumnies, or secret reproaches,  
 or words of suspicion, to vindicate  
 their own unholy lives, and make  
 people believe that serious piety is  
 faction and hypocrisy. The black  
 tincture of their minds, and the  
 design and drift of their preach-  
 ing may be perceived in the jeers,  
 girds, and slanderous intimations  
 against the most diligent servants  
 of the Lord. The *controverted*  
*Truths* that such maintain, they

present as *errors* : Their *unavoidable errors* they represent as *heresie* : Their *duties* they represent as *faults* ; and their *humane frailties* as enormous *crimes* : They feign them to be guilty of the things that never entered into their thoughts : And if *some* that have professed Godliness, be guilty of greater crimes, they would make men believe that the rest are such, and that the family of Christ is to be judged of by a *Judas*, and the scope is to intimate that either their Profession is *culpable*, or *needless*, and *less commendable*. *Regeneration* they would make to be but the entrance into the Church by Baptism, and any further Conversion, than the leaving off some gross sins, and taking up some heartless forms of duty, to be but a fancy or unnecessary thing : And they would draw poor people to believe, that if they be born again Sacramentally of water, they may be saved, though they be not born again by the *renewing of the*

*the Holy Spirit.* Being strangers themselves to the mylerie of *Regeneration*, and to the life of Faith, and a heavenly Conversation, and to the loving and serving God with all their Soul and Might: They first endeavour to quiet themselves with a belief that these are but fancies or unnecessary, and then to deceive the people with that by which they have first deceived themselves.

And it is worthy your observation, *what is it in Religion* that these Formal Hypocrites are against. There are scarce any words so sound or holy, but they can bear them, if they be but deprived of their *Life*: Nor scarce any duty, if it be but *mortified*, but they can endure. But it is the *Spirit* and *Life* of all Religion which they cannot bear. As a *Body* differeth from a *Carkass*, not by the *parts*, but by the *Life*; so there is a certain *life* in preaching, and prayer, and all other acts of worship, which

is perceived by several sorts of hearers. The Godly perceive it to their edification and delight : For here it is that they are quickened and encouraged. Life begetteth life, as fire kindleth fire. The *ungodly* often perceive it to their vexation, if not to their conviction and conversion : This Life in preaching, praying, discipline, reproof, and conference, is it which biteth, and galleth, and disquieteth their consciences. And *this* they kick and rail against : *This* is the thing that will not let them sleep quietly in their sin and misery; but is calling and jogging them to awake, and will not let them sin in peace, but will either convert them or torment them before the Time. It is the Life of Religion that the Hypocrite wants; and the Life that he is most against. A painted fire burneth not. A dead Lion biteth not. The Carcass of an Enemy is not formidable. Let the words of that Sermon that most offendeth them, be separated from the Life, and

and put into a Humily, and said or  
 read in a formal, drowsie, or a School-  
 boys tone, and they can bear it and  
 commend it. Let the same words of  
 prayer which now they like not, be  
 said over as a life-less customary form,  
 and they can like it well. I speak not  
 against the use of forms, but the abuse  
 of them: Not against the Body, but  
 the Carcase. Let forms themselves be  
 used by a spiritual serious man, in a  
 spiritual serious manner, with the in-  
 terposition of any quickening exhor-  
 tations, or occasional passages, that  
 tend to keep them waken and atten-  
 tive, and make them feel what you  
 mean and are about, and you shall see  
 they love not such animated forms. It  
 is the Living Christian, and Lively  
 worship, and serious spiritual Religion,  
 which they hate: Kill it and they can  
 bear it. Let the picture of my enemy  
 be nearer and comelier than his per-  
 son was, and I can endure it in my bed-  
 chamber, better than himself in the  
 meanest dress. It is the living Christians

that in all parts of the world are chiefly persecuted. Let them be once dead, and dead-hearted hypocrites themselves will honor them, especially at a sufficient distance. They will destroy the living Saints, and keep Holy days for the dead ones. Wo to you Scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, because ye build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the Righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets. Fill ye up the measure of your Fathers: ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Matth. 23. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. The Dog that will not meddle with the dead-creature, will pursue the living; and when he sees it stir no more, will leave it. Christianity without seriousness is not Christianity, and therefore not liable to the

the hatred of its enemies as such. Say any thing and do any thing how strict soever, if you will but act it as a Player on the stage, or do it coldly, slightly, and as if you were but in jest, you may have their approbation. But it is this *life*, and *seriousness*, and worshipping God in *Spirit and truth*, that convinceth them that *they themselves are lifeless*, and therefore troubleth their deceitful peace, and therefore must not have their friendship. If it were the meer *bulk* of duty that they are weary of, how comes it to pass that a *Papist* at his *Psalter*, *Beads*, and *Mass-books*, can spend more hours without much weariness or opposition, than we can do in serious worship? Turn all but into *words and beads*, and *canonical hours and days*, and *shews*, and *ceremony*, and you may be as religious as you will, and be *Righteous over-much*, and few will hate, or reproach, or persecute you *among them*, as too precise or strict. But *living Christians* and

warship, come among them like fire, that burneth them, and makes them smart, with a word that is quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joynts and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, Hebr. 4. 12.

And the enmity of the Cainites may teach the Christian, what he should be, and wherein his excellency lieth. It is life and seriousness that your enemies hate: and therefore it is life and seriousness that you must above all maintain; though dead-hearted hypocrites never so much oppose and contradict you.

O sirs, they are no trifles, but the greatest things that God hath set before you in his Word, and called you out to prosecute and possess: and your time of seeking them is short; and therefore you have no time for trifles, nor any to lose in idleness and sloath. And of all men, Preachers should be most sensible of this.



If they were not against serious holiness in others, it is double wickedness for such as they, to be against it in themselves. It is great things that they have to study and to speak of, and such as call for the greatest seriousness, and reverence and gravity in the speaker, and condemn all trifling in matter or in manner. A man that is sent of Christ to run for an immortal crown, or to direct others in such a race, to save his own, or other mens souls, from endless misery, should be ashamed to fill up his time with trifles, or to be flight and cold about such great and weighty things. All the heart; and soul, and might, is little enough for matters of such unspeakable importance. When I hear Preachers or people spend their time in little impertinent fruitless things, that do but divert them from the great business of their lives, or to dally with the greatest matters, rather than to use them and treat of them with a seriousness suitable to their importance;

I oft think of the words of Seneca the  
 serious Moralist, as shaming the hypo-  
 crisie of such trifling Preachers and  
 Professors of the Christian faith ;  
 [ *Verba copiosa componit, & interrogans  
 vincula necis, & diis, Acuta sunt  
 ista ! Nihil acutius arista, & in quo  
 est utilis ? Quidam inutilia, & inefficacia  
 ipsa subtilitas reddit :* ] that is, [ You  
 compose copious words, and yet hard  
 knots by curious questions ; and you say,  
 these are acute things ! What is more  
 acute than the peal of corn ? and yet  
 what is it good for ? subtilty it self makes  
 some things unprofitable, and uneffectual. ]

[ *Iste ineptia Poetis relinquunt, qui-  
 bus aures oblectare propositum est &  
 dulcem fabulamnectere: sed qui inge-  
 nia sanare, & fidem in rebus humanis  
 retinere, ac memoriam officiorum ani-  
 mis ingerere volunt, seria loquuntur,  
 & magnis viribus rem agant:* ] that is,  
 [ Leave these toys or fooleries to Poets,  
 whose business is to delight the ear,  
 and to compose a pleasant fable, But they  
 that mean to heal mens understand-  
 ings,

ings, and retain credibility among men, and to bring into men's minds the remembrance of their duties, must speak seriously, and do their business with all their might.]

*Demens omnibus merito videret —*

He would justly by all be taken for a mad man, that when the town expecteth to be stormed by the enemies, and others are busie at work for their defence, will sit idle, proposing some curious questions.] — *Nunquid tibi demens*

*videtur, si istis impendero operam, & nunc obsidior? quid agam? mors me sequitur, vita fugit; Adversus hæc me doce aliquid: effice ut ego mortem non timeam, & vita me non effugiat.]*

[And shall not I be taken for a mad man, If I should busie my self about such things that am now besieged? what shall I do? death pursueth me: life flyeth from me: teach me something against these: make death not dreadful to me, or life not to fly from me.]

*Si multum esset ætatis, parce dispensandum erit, ut sufficeret necessariis:*

*nunc*

nunc quæ dementia est, supervacua disce-  
 re in tanta temporis egestate! ] [ If we  
 had much time, we should sparingly lay  
 it out, that it might suffice for necessary  
 things: But now what a madness is it, to  
 learn things needless or superfluous in so  
 great a scarcity of time! ] [ Metire ergo  
 ætatem tuam: tam multa non capit.  
 Measure thy age: It's not enough for so  
 many things. ] [ Relinque istum ludum  
 literarum Philosophis. Rem magnifi-  
 cam! ad syllabas vocant qui animum  
 minuta discendo diminuunt & conte-  
 runt, & id agunt, ut Philosophia potius  
 difficilis quam magna videatur: Socra-  
 tes, qui totam Philosophiam revocavit  
 ad mores, hanc summam dixit esse sa-  
 pientiam, bona malaque distinguere. ]  
 [ Leave this learned play to Philoso-  
 phers: A gallant business! They call  
 us to syllables, and debase and de-  
 press the mind by learning such little  
 trivial things, and make Philosophy  
 rather to seem a matter of difficulty  
 than great. Socrates, that revoked  
 all Philosophy to manners, did call this  
 the

the highest wisdom, to distinguish good and evil. ]

Did *Seneca* see by the light of nature, so much of the necessity of seriousness and diligence, about the matters of the soul? and so much of the madness of spending words and time on trifles? And yet shall there be found a man among professed Christians, and among the Preachers of Faith and Holiness, that plead for trifling, and scorn at seriousness, and count them moderate and wise that a Heathen brands as *trifling* and *distracted*?

What is it that cloudeth the glory of Christianity, and keepeth so great a part of the world in Heathenism and Idolatry: but this, that among Christians there are so few that are Christians indeed? and those few are so obscured by the multitude of formal trifling Hypocrites, that Christianity is measured and judged of by the lives of those that are no Christians? Religion is a thing to be demonstrated and honoured and commended by practice.

*practice: words alone* are ineffectual to represent its excellency to so *blind* a world, that must know by *feeling*, having lost their *sight*. In our *professed faith* we mount unto the Heavens, and leave poor unbelievers wallowing in the dirt. O what a transcendent, unconceivable glory, do we profess to expect with God unto eternity! And what manner of persons should they be, in all holy conversation and godliness, that look for such a life as this? How basely should they esteem those transitory things, that are the food and felicity of the sensual world? How patiently should they undergo contempt and scorn, and whatsoever man can inflict upon them? How studiously should they devote and refer all their time, and strength, and wealth, and interest, to this their glorious blessed end? How seriously should they speak of, and how industriously should they seek, such sure, such near, such endless, joys? Did professed Christians  
more

more exactly conform their hearts and lives to their profession and holy rule, their *lives* would confute the reproaches of their enemies, and command a reverent and awful estimation from the observers, and do more to convince the unbelieving world of the truth and dignity of the Christian faith, than all the words of the most subtile disputants. *Christianity* being an affecting practical science, must practically and affectionately be declared, according to its nature: *Arguments* do but paint it out: And *pictures* do no more make known its excellency, than the picture of meat and drink makes known its sweetness. When a doctrine so holy, is visibly exemplified, and liveth, and walketh, and worketh in serious Christians before the world: Either this or nothing will convince them and constrain them, to glorifie our Lord, and say, that God is among us or in us of a truth; *Matth. 5. 16. 1 Cor. 14. 25.* But it is unchristian lives that darkeneth the glory of

of the *Christian faith*. When men that profess such glorious hopes, shall be as sordidly earthly, and sensual, and ambitious, and impotent, and impatient as other men, they seem but fantastical dissemblers.

And yet shall there be found such a perfidious wretch under the heavens of God, as a *professed Minister of Christ*, that shall *subtily* or *openly* labour to make an exact, and holy, and heavenly conversation a matter of *reproach* and *scorn*, and that under pretence of reprovng the sins of *Hypocrites* and *Schismatics*, shall make the exactest conformity to the *Christian rule*, and faithfullst obedience to the *Almighty Sovereign*, to seem to be but hypocrisie or self-conceitedness, or needless trouble, if not the way of sedition, and publick trouble, and turning all things upside down? that cannot reprove sin, without malicious insinuating flanders or suspicions against the holy Law, and holy life, that are most

con-



contrary to sin, as life to death, as health to sickness, and as light to darkness?

For *any man*, especially *any professed Christian*, *any where* to oppose or scorn at godliness, is a dreadful sign, as well as a heinous sin: But for a *Preacher of Godliness* to oppose and scorn at *Godliness*, and that in the *Pulpit*, while he pretendeth to promote it, and plead for it in the name of Christ, is a sin that should strike the heart of man with horreur to conceive of.

Though I cannot subscribe myself to that passage in the second part of the tenth Homily, *Tom. 2. page 150.* ( however I very much love and honour the Book of Homilies ) yet for their sakes that not only can subscribe to it, but would have all kept out of the Ministry that cannot, and that take it for that Doctrine of the Church of *England* which they will believe and Preach, I will recite it to the terror of the guilty,

guilty, not to drive to despair, but to awake them or to shame them for their opposition to the wayes of godliness.

Expounding Psalm I. 1. Blessed is the man that hath not walked after the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful ] having shewed who are the [ungodly] and [the sinners] it addeth these words:

“ [The third sort he calleth scorers ;  
 “ that is, a sort of men whose hearts  
 “ are so stuffed with malice, that they  
 “ are not contented to dwell in sin,  
 “ and to lead their lives in all kind of  
 “ wickedness, but also they do con-  
 “ temn and scorn in others all god-  
 “ liness, true Religion, all hone-  
 “ sty and vertue. Of the two first  
 “ sorts of men, I will not say, but  
 “ they may take Repentance, and be  
 “ converted unto God. Of the third  
 “ sort, I think I may without danger  
 “ of Gods judgement pronounce, that  
 “ never any yet were converted unto  
 “ God

“ God by Repentance, but continued  
 “ still in their abominable wickedness,  
 “ heaping up to themselves damnation  
 “ against the day of Gods inevitable  
 “ judgement.

Though I dare not say, but *some*  
 such have Repented, yet let the scorn-  
 ers that believe this, remember, that  
 they subscribe the sentence of their  
 own condemnation.

Though I look upon this sort of  
 the enemies of Holiness as those that  
 are as unlikely to be recovered and  
 saved, as almost any people in the  
 world, except *Apostates* and *Malici-  
 ous Blesphemers* of the Holy Ghost,  
 yet in compassion to the people and  
 themselves, I shall plead the cause of  
 God with their consciences, and try  
 what Light can do with their under-  
 standings, and the terrours of the Lord  
 with their hardened hearts.

1. *A Preacher of the Gospel should  
 much excell the people in understanding:*  
 And therefore this sin is greater in  
 them than other men: what meant,  
 what

what light do they sin against? Either thou knewest the Necessity of striving for salvation with the greatest diligence, or thou dost not. If not, what a sin and shame is it to undertake the sacred Office of the Ministry, while thou knowest not the things that are necessary to salvation, and that which every Infant in the faith doth know? But if thou dost know it, how dost thou make shift maliciously to oppose it, without feeling the beginnings of Hell upon thy Conscience? When it is thy work to read the Scriptures, and meditate on them, dost thou not read thy doom, and meditate terror? How canst thou choose but perceive that the scope of the Word of God is contrary to the bent of thy affections and suggestions? Yea what is more evident by the *Light of Nature*, than that God and our salvation cannot be regarded with too much holy seriousness, exactness and industry? Should not the best things be best loved?

loved? and the greatest matters have our greatest care? And is there any thing to be compared with God and our eternal state? O what overwhelming subjects are these to a sober and considerate mind! what toys are all things in comparison of them! And yet dost thou make light of them, and also teach men so to do! As if there were something else that better deserved mens greatest care and diligence than they. What, a Preacher, and not a Believer! Or a Believer, and yet not see enough in the matters of Eternity to engage all our powers of soul and body against all the world that should stand in competition?

2. Is it not sinful and terrible enough, to be thy self in a carnal unregenerated state? ( Rom. 1. 13. ) and to be without the Spirit and life of Christ ( v. 9. ) but thou must be so cruel as to make others miserable also? Psal. 50. 16, 17. [ But to the wicked saith God, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?

or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee? ]  
 Matth. 5. 19. Whosoever shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven: But whosoever shall do and teach the same, shall be called Great in the Kingdom of Heaven. ]

3. What an aggravation is it of thy impiety and soul-murder, that thou art bound by Office to teach men that life of holiness which thou opposest, and to perswade them to that with all thy Might, which thou endeavourst closely and cunningly to disgrace! And wilt thou be a traitor to Christ in the name of a Messenger and Preacher of the Gospel? Wilt thou engage thy self to promote his interest, and to use all thy skill and power to build men up in holiness and obedience; and when thou hast done this, wilt thou disgrace and hinder it? Dost thou take on thee to go on  
 the

the message of Christ, and then speak against him? We do not find that Judas dealt thus with him: when he sent him as he did other Preachers, we read not that he preached against him. O let not my soul be numbred with such men in the day of the Lord! It will be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for the refusers of the Word and Grace of Christ. What then will be the doom of the opposers? And above all of those treacherous opposers, that pretend themselves to propagate and promote them.

If the wit and malice of Satans instruments were sharpened against the ways and servants of the Lord, it belongs to you to plead Christs cause, and shame these absurd unreasonable gain-sayers, and stop the mouth of impious contradiction: And will you joyn with the gain-sayers, and secretly or openly say as they? Who should confound the deriders of a holy life but you? Who should lay

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open

open the excellencies of Christ, the glory of heaven, the terrors of the Lord, and all other obligations to the most serious Religiousness, but *you* that have undertaken it as your calling and employment? If any man in the Parish were so Atheistical and Brutish, as to think God unworthy of your dearest Love, our most exact obedience, and most laborious service, who should display this Atheists folly, but *you* that are doubly (as Christians, and Ministers) obliged to defend the honour of your Lord? If any of the *people* should fall into such a dream or do-  
rage, as to question the Necessity of our utmost diligence in our preparations for eternal life, who should awake them by lifting up their voices as a trumpet, and help to recover their understandings, but *you* that are the watchmen, and know their blood will be required at your hands, if *you* give them not loud and timely warning? If any subtil malicious servant of  
the



the Devil, should plead against the necessity of Holiness, and dissuade the people from serving God with all their might, who should be ready to confirm the weak, and strengthen and encourage them that are thus assaulted, and help to keep up their zeal and forwardness, but you that are *Leaders* in the *Army* of the Lord? Is it not a *holy God* that you are engaged to serve? and a *holy Church* in which you have your station? And a *Communion of Saints* in which you have undertaken to administer the *holy things of God*? Have you not read what was done to *Nadab* and *Abihu*, when *Moses* told *Aaron*, [*This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before the people I will be glorified,*] *Lev. 10. 3.* Is it not a *holy Law* and *Gospel* which you publish? You have undertaken to warn the sloathful, the sensual, the worldly, and the prophane, that they strive to enter in at the strait gate, and seek first the king-

dom of God and his Righteousness, Luk.  
13. 24. Matth. 6. 33. and to give di-  
ligence to make sure their calling and  
election, 2 Pet. 1. 10. and to give all  
diligence in adding virtue to their faith,  
&c. 2 Pet. 1. 5. and with all diligence  
to keep their hearts, Prov. 4. 23. And  
are you the men that would quench  
their zeal, and destroy the holy dili-  
gence which you should preach? The  
Lord touch your hearts, and recover  
you in time, or how woful will it be  
with such hardened Hypocrites, that  
in the Light, and in his family and li-  
very, and under his standard and co-  
lours, dare prove Traytors and Ene-  
mies to the Lord ?

4. And what an addition is it to  
your guilt, that you speak against God  
in his own name ? By Office you are  
to deliver his message, and speak to  
the people in his name, and in his  
stead, 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. And dare you  
before the Sun, and under the Heavens  
of God, and in his hearing, perswade  
men that the most holy God is against  
Holiness?

*Holiness? and the King of Saints is an adversary to sanctity? and that he that made his holy Law, is against the most exact obeying of it? dare you prefix a [Thus saith the Lord,] to so impious a speech as [It is in vain to serve the Lord? what needs there so much ado for your salvation?] Dare you go to men as from the Lord, and say [You are too careful and diligent in his service! Less ado may serve the turn! What need this fervour, and redeeming time! This is but puritanism or Preciseness. It is better to do as the most, and venture your souls without so much ado.] Who could at last hold up his face, or stand before the dreadful Tribunal, that should be found in the guilt of such a crime! What, to put God into the similitude of Satan, and describe the most Holy as the enemy of Holiness! and make him plead against himself, and disgrace his own Image, and dissuade men from that which he himself hath made of necessity to their salvation! What viler blasphemy can be uttered!*

5. And it aggravateth your sin, that your *Relation* obligeth you to the most tender affections to your people: And yet that you should seduce them to damnation. For the *Nurse* to poyson them; for the *Parents* to cut the childrens throats, is worse than for an enemy to do it. If the Devil our professed enemy should himself appear to us, and say, *Prepare not so seriously for death: Be not so strict, and diligent, and holy,* ] it were not, in many respects, so bad, as for you to do it, that should help to save us from his snares. You that profess your selves their Fathers! that should travel in birth till Christ be formed in your peoples hearts! that should love your people as your own bowels, and tender the weak, and pity the wicked, and stick at no labour, suffering, or cost, that might advance their holiness, and further their salvation; For you to tempt men into a *careless* life, and turn them out of the holy way, is an

an aggravated cruelty. It's worse for the Shepherd to destroy us than the Wolfe. Read Ezekiel 34. & 33.

6. *Are not you ashamed thus to contradict your selves?* What can you find to preach from the word of God, that tendeth not to this holy diligence which you are against? How can you make shift to preach an hour, and not acquaint men with the Duty and Necessity of seeking God with all their Might? Do you not tell them, that except they be converted and new born, they shall not enter into the Kingdom of God, John 3. 3, 5. Mat. 18. 2. And that without holiness none shall see the Lord. Heb. 12. 14. And that if they live after the flesh, they shall die, Rom. 8. 13. And that except their righteousness exceed the righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 5. 20. And will you in your Application, or private discourses unsay all this again, and give God and

your selves a lye? and let people see, that the Pulpit is to you but as a Stage, and that you believe not what you speak?

7. Consider, that your place and calling, maketh you the most successful servants of the Devil, and so the most bloody murderers of souls, while you give your judgement against a strict and heavenly life. For a drunkard in an Ale-house to mock the Minister, and rail at serious Religion, is less regarded by sober men, and small advantage to his Masters cause; nay the wickedness of his life, is so great a shame to his judgement, that it inclineth many to think well of those that he speaks against. But when a man that pretendeth to learning and understanding, and to be himself a Pastor of the Church, and Preacher of the mysteries of Christ, shall make them odious that are most careful of their souls, and most exact in pleasing God, and shall make all serious diligence for heaven to seem

seem but *intemperate zeal* and *self-conceitedness*: and shall describe a Saint, as if the formal lifeless Hypocrite, that giveth God but the leavings of the world, and never set his heart on heaven, were indeed the man: what a snare is here for the perdition of the ignorant! They, they are naturally averse from holiness, and are easily perswaded to think that to be unnecessary or bad, which seems so much above them and against them, will be much confirmed in their mistakes and misery, when they hear their *Teachers speak without them*, the same that *Satan* by his suggestions doth *within them*. This turneth a *trembling sinner*, into a *hardned scorner*: he that before went under the daily correction of his conscience, for neglecting God, and omitting holy duties, and living to the flesh, grows bold and fearless, when he hears the *Preacher* disgrace the stricter, purer way. By that time he hath heard a while the *fear of God* derided as *precise-*

ness, and tender conscience reproached as a *scrupulous foolish thing*, his conscience grows more pliable to his lusts, and hath little more to say against them. When Gods own professed Ministers that should be wiser and better than the people, are against this zeal and industry for heaven, the people will soon think, that at least it is tolerable in them: And they will sooner learn to deride a Saint from a Sermon, or discourse of a Preacher or a learned man, than from the scorns or talk of hundreds of the ignorant. And wilt thou teach them to hate godliness, who hast undertaken before the righteous God, to teach them to practise it? He that dispraiseth it, though under other names, and representeth it as odious, though masked with the title of some odious vice, doth indeed endeavour to make men hate it. And what a terrible account wilt thou have to make, when the seduction and transgression of all these sinners shall be charged



charged upon thee? When Christ shall say to the haters, deriders, and opposers of his holy wayes and servants [*In as much as you did it to one of the least of these my Brethren, you did it unto me.*] How dost thou scorn the image of your maker? and hate the Saints whose Communion you professed to believe; and deride or oppose that serious holiness, without which you had no hope of being saved? If then the sinners become your accusors, and say, [*Lord we thought it had been but unnecessary preciseness, and that serious Christians had been but self-conceited factions hypocrites, and that lip service with a common worldly life might have served the turn; We heard our Preachers represent such strict and zealous men, as turbulent, seditious, and refractory, as odious and not as imitable: Their application was against them: Their discourse derided them: Of them we learnt it: We thought they were wiser and better than we: Of whom should we learn*

but

but of our Teachers!] Wo to the Teachers that ever they were born, that must be then found guilty of this crime.

If Adam's excuse was Eve's accusation, [The woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat.] And the womans excuse did charge the Serpent [The Serpent beguiled me and I did eat,] Gen. 3. 12, 13. ( though it freed not the excusers, ) How will it load you, when your people shall say [The Teachers that we thought thou gavest us, did teach us and go before us in setting against this holy diligence; and we did but learn of them, and follow them!]

8. Are not the people backward enough to the serving of God with all their might, unless you hinder them? Is not the corrupted heart of lapsed man averse enough, to the matters of salvation, but you must make them worse? If you had to do with the best and holiest person in the

the world that walketh with God in the most heavenly conversation, he would tell you that his dull and backward heart hath no need of *clogs*, and pull-backs, and discouragements, but of all the help that can be afforded him, to quicken him up to greater diligence. The *most zealous* lament that they are *so cold*: The *most heavenly* lament that they are *so earthly*, and *so strange* to heaven: The *most laborious* lament that they are *so sloathful*: and the *fruitfullest* Believers that they are *so unprofitable*; and those that are *most watchful* of their words and deeds, that they are *so careless*; and those that *most diligently* redeem their time, lament it that they lose so much; and those that walk *most accurately* and *exactly*, that they are *so loose*, and keep no closer to the Rule. And yet darest thou increase th: backwardness of the *ungodly*! will not their *carnal interests* and *lusts* serve turn to keep them from a *holy life*! Is not *Satan* strong enough

of

of himself? will not the *common distaste* of *Godliness* in the world, sufficiently prejudice and avert them without *thy helps*? do you see your people so *forward to do too much* for Heaven, that you must pull them back? Cannot souls be *damned* without your *furtherance*? or is it a *desirable work*? and will it *pay* you for your cost and labour? The way is up hill; The best of us are weak, and frequently ready to sit down! A thousand impediments are cast before us by Satan and the world, to make us linger till the time be past; and many a charm of pleasure and diversion to make us sleep till the door be shut. And *Ministers* are sent to keep us *waking*, and take us by the hand, and lead us on, and remove impediments: and shall they set in with the enemy, and be our chiefest hinderers? O treacherous guides! O miserable helps! Are not our dark understandings, our earthly, dull and backward hearts, our passions

passions and troubled affections, our appetites and sensual inclinations, our natural strangeness and aver-  
seness to God, and Heaven, and holi-  
ness, enough to hinder us *without you*?  
Are not all the temptations of the  
Devil, the allurements of the flesh  
and world, the impediments of po-  
verty and riches, of flattery and of  
frowns, of friends and foes, in our  
callings, and in our diversions,  
are not *all these* enough to cool and  
dull us, and keep us from serving God  
*too much*, and being *too careful* and  
*diligent* for our souls, but Preachers  
themselves must be our *impediments*  
*and snares*? Now the Lord deliver  
our souls from such impediments,  
and his Church from such unhappy  
guides!

9. Consider whom thou imitatest in  
this. Is it Christ, or Satan? Christ  
calletth men to *strive*, to *labour*, to  
*seek first*, to *watch*, to *pray alwayes*,  
and *not wax faint*, Luk. 12. 24.  
John 6. 27. Mat. 6. 33. & 25. 13.

Luke

Luke 18.1. The Apostles call men to be [ fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works, to pray continually, to be a chosen generation, a Royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar people to shew forth the praises of him that hath called us, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 5. 9. 1 Theff. 5. 17. Tit. 2. 14. Rom. 12. 11. To fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life, 1 Tim. 6. 12. To serve God acceptably (being as a consuming fire) with reverence and Godly fear, Heb. 12. 28, 29. To be steadfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58.] And dare you gainsay the Lord and his Apostles, and concurr with Satan, and the Pharisees and enemies of Christ?

10. You do your worst to make the sacred office of the Ministry to become contemptible, as Eli's Sons did: Poor people

people that cannot sufficiently distinguish the *Doctrine* from the *Application*, the *office* from the *person*, the *use* from the *abuse*, will be tempted to run from the ordinances of God; and think the worse of others for your sakes, and suspect all their faith, because you mix such poyson in it. And the more Holy and Necessary the office and work is, the greater is your sin in corrupting it, or making it suspected or abhorred.

Consider soberly of these things, and then go on and speak against a *Life of Holy diligence* if you dare.

I know you'll say it is not *Godliness*, but *singularity* or *humour*, or *disobedience*, or *hypocrisie*, or *faction*, that you oppose: and perhaps you'll instance in some that are guilty of some of these, or seem so at the least.

But 1. I do here solemnly profess that I hate these crimes as well as you: and that is not any part of my intention to plead for *intemperance*, *disobedience in lawfull things*,  
 for

for *schisms*, or *faction*, or any *irregularity*: And this I here put in against those that are disposed to *misunderstand* and *misreport* us, and leave it as *on record* to prove them *slanders*, that shall accuse me of *defending any such thing*. And I do protest against those on the other side, that will fetch encouragement for any transgression from my necessary plea for the *holy industry* and *vigilancy* of Believers. And moreover, I do profess that it is *only the opposers of Holiness* that I mean in this Defence, and have not the least intent to intimate that any others are guilty of that crime that are not. But having premised this protestation, to prevent mistakes and false reports, I answer now to the guilty.

2. If it be *crimes* only that you are against, deliver your self so, as may not lay reproach or suspicion on *Godliness*, which is most opposite to all crimes. Cannot you preach against *Divisions*, *Disobedience*, or any other



other *sin*, without any scornful intimations or reflections against mens *diligent serving of the Lord*.

3. Why do not you commend those that are *not liable* to your accusations, and encourage them in *holiness*, and draw others to imitate them? And why do you not commend the *Good* where you discommend the *evil* that is commixt.

4. Shall *Health* and *Life* be made a scorn, because there are few but have some *distemper* or *disease*? Shall *Christianity* and *Holiness* be secretly reproached, because *all Christians* have *some* fault to be accused of? If men be faulty, you should perswade them to be *more strict* and *diligent*, and not *less*: It is not for want of watchfulness and strictness that they *sin*. Nothing is more contrary to their faults, than *Holiness*. There is no other way for their full reformation. And therefore all true humbled Christians are ready to confess their *faultiness* themselves; but so far are they from thinking

thinking the worse of *piety* for it, that  
 it's one great reason that moveth  
 them to go on, and to read, and hear,  
 and pray, and meditate, and do so  
 much that they may get more strength  
 against their *faults*. Must they think  
 ill of *food*, and *Physick*, and *exercise*,  
 because they are *infirm*? All faithful  
 Ministers tell their people plainly of  
 their *sins* (so far as they are acquainted  
 with them) as well as you: But  
 they do it not in a way reapproachful  
 to their holy diligence: They do not  
 therefore call them off from *Godliness*,  
 nor tempt them to be less in the use  
 of means, but *more*, by how much  
 their need is greater. A *holy heart*,  
 and a *malignant heart*, will shew their  
 difference in the reprovng of the  
*same fault*. The one layeth all the *odi-  
 um* on the *vice*, and honoureth the *holy  
 obedience* of the Saints. The other  
 fastneth his sting upon the *Godly*, and  
 under pretence of dishonouring their  
*faults*, doth seek to fasten the disho-  
 nour on their *holiness*. And those that  
 are

are so minded, will never want occasion or pretence, for the worst that Satan would have them say. The Church will never be without some Hypocrites, and scandals, nor the best without some faults and passions; nor the holiest action without some mixture of humane frailty and infirmity; nor will the very goodness and holiness of the action, be free from plausible calumnies and scorns, while there is the wit and venom of the Serpent in the heads and hearts of wicked men.

How easie is it to put a name of ignominy upon every person, and every duty? To charge any man with Hypocrisie, or Pride? To take the wisest man for self-conceited, because he is not of the accusers mind? To call our obedience to God, by the name of disobedience unto man, when man forbids it, as they used the three witnesses Dan. 3. and Daniel himself for praying in his house, Dan. 6. though they confessed they had nothing else against him? To call Gods Truth by the

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the name of *Heresie*, and *Heresie* by the name of *Truth*? To charge all with *Schism* that dare not subject their souls to the usurpation and arrogant impositions of the sons of Pride, that have neither Authority nor Ability to Govern us, as the Papists deal by the greatest part of the Christian world? To lay snares for mens Consciences, and then accuse them for falling into those snares? To make new *Articles of faith*, till they have transcended the capacity of *Divine* and *Rational belief*, and then condemn us for not believing them? To make *Laws* for the Church, *unnecessary* in their own opinion, and sinful in other mens, and command things which they know that others think the Lord forbids, and then load them with the sufferings and reproaches of the *disobedient, turbulent, heretical, schismatical, or seditious*? To call men *factions*, if they will not be of *their faction*? and *Sectaries*, if they will not unreasonably subject

ject their souls to them, and joyn with an imperious Sect against the Catholick Unity and Simplicity? All which the Romanists practice upon the Church of Christ. How easie, but how unreasonable, and yet how irresistible is all this? How easie is it to call a meeting of sober Christians, for prayer and mutual edification, such as that was, *Acts 12. 12.* by the name of a factious schismatical Conventicle, and a meeting of Drunkards, or Gamesters, by a more gentle, less disgraceful name? To say a man becomes a Preacher, when he modestly reproveth another for his sins, or charitably exhorteth him in order to his salvation, or giveth any necessary plain instruction to his family, for whom he must give account? Believe it, it will be a poor excuse to any man, that becomes an enemy to the diligence of a Saint, that he could thus cloak his malice, and cloath a Saint with the vizor of an Hypocrite, and the rags of any odious Sect.

If

If the *Pharisees* were to be believed, it was *not* they, but *Christ* that was the *Hypocrite*: nor was it the *Son of God*, but an *Enemy* to *Caesar*, and a *Blasphemer* that they put to death. But will not *Christ* know his *sheep*, though he find them torn in a *wolf's skin*? You say it is *turbulent Precisians* that you strike; but what if *Christ* find but *one of the least of his Bretheren* bleeding by it? It is but *Hypocrites* or *Schismatics* that you reproach; but if *Christ* find an *humble serious Christian* suffering by your abuse, and you to answer it, I would not be in your coats for all the greatness and honour that you shall have before your everlasting shame. If *Tertullus* accuse a *pestilent fellow*, and a *mover of sedition*, and *Christ* find an *holy laborious Apostle* in bonds and suffering by it, it is not his names that will excuse him, and make an *Apostle*, or *persecution* to be another thing.

**T**O return to the *endangered flocks*:  
 Look upwards first, and think  
 whether *Heaven* be worth your la-  
 bour! Look downwards, and think  
 whether *Earth* be more worthy of it!  
 Lay up your *treasures* where you  
 must dwell for ever. If that be *here*,  
 then scrape, and flatter, and get all  
 that you can: But if it be not *here*,  
 but in *another life*, then hearken to  
 your Lord, and lay up for your selves  
 a treasure in heaven, and there let  
 your very hearts be set, Math. 6. 20, 21.  
 And upon the peril o' everlasting mi-  
 sery, hearken not to any man that will  
 tempt you from a diligent holy life.  
 It is a serious business, deal seriously in  
 it; and be not laught or mockt out of  
*Heaven*, by the flouts of a distracted  
 sensual Athiest. If any of them will  
 pretend to sobriety and wisdom, and  
 undertake to prove that God should  
 not be loved and served, and your sal-  
 vation sought with all your *Might*, and

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with

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with greater care and diligence than any earthly thing, procure me a sober conference with *that man*, and try whether I shall not prove him to be a befoold servant of the Devil, and a mischievous enemy of your salvation, and his own. O that we might have but *sober debates*, instead of *jeers* and *scorns*, and *railing*, with this sort of men! How quickly should we shew you, that they must renounce the *Scripture*, and renounce *Christianity*, and ( if that be nothing with them ) that they must renounce *God*, and renounce *right Reason*, and *unman* themselves, if they will renounce a *holy heavenly life*, and blame them that make it their *principal business* in the world to prepare for the world to come.

But if they will not be intreated to such a *sober conference*, will you that hear them ( if you care what becomes of you ) but *come to us*, and hear what *we can say* for a *holy life*, before you hearken to them;  
and



and let your souls have fair play, and shew that you have so much love to your selves, as not to cast away salvation at the derision of a fool, before you have heard the other side.

If I make not good the *strictest* Laws of God Almighty, against the most *subtil cavils* of any of the instruments of Satan, then tell me that *Infidels* or *Epicures* are in the right. Compare their words with the words of God. Consider well but that one Text, 2 Pet. 3. 11. and tell me whether it suit with their opinions, [*Seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all manner of holy Conversation and Godliness; looking for and hastning to the coming of the day of God!*] Did these words but sink into your hearts, the next time you heard any man reproach a *holy, heavenly life*, it would perhaps make you think of the words of Paul to such another, *Acts 13. 10.* [*O full of all subtilty and all mischief,*

thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right wayes of the Lord?]

And if Holiness be evil spoken of by them that never tried it, what wonder! Christ hath foretold us that it must be so, Matth. 5. 11, 12. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you. ] John 15. 19, 20. [ If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you, &c. ] 1 Pet. 4. 4, 5, 14. They think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead----- If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, and of God, resteth upon you; On their part  
he

he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.] Seneca himself oft telleth us, that among the *Heathens* *Virtue* was a derision, so far is the nature of man degenerated. The question is not what you are called or taken to be, but what you are [*Intus te ipsum considera* (inquit Sen.) *non qualis sis aliis credas; Plerumque boni inepti & inertes vocantur. Mihi contingat iste derisus: Aequo animo audienda sunt imperitorum convitia; & ad honesta vadendi contemnendus est iste contemptus.*] that is [Inwardly consider of thy self, and judge not what thou art by the words of others: For the most part Good men are called fools and dullards: Let me be so derided: The reproaches of the ignorant (or unskilful) must be patiently heard, and this contempt of one that followeth virtue, must be contemned.] Yea it is the highest honour to be content to be accounted bad, that we may not be so; and the greatest trial whether we be indeed sincere, to be put

to it, to be either accounted *Hypocrites*, or to be such. Methinks I can scarce too oft recite that excellent saying of *Seneca*, *Epist.* 72. *Nemo plus videtur aestimare virtutem, nemo magis illi esse devotus, quam qui boni viri famam perdidit, ne conscientiam perderet ;* ] that is, [ *No man seems to set a higher price on virtue; no man seems to be more devoted to it, then he that hath lost the reputation of being a good man, lest he should lose his conscience.* ]

But perhaps you'l ask, *May not a man be righteous overmuch?* as is intimated, *Eccles.* 7. 16.

I answer, It is making a mans self overwise or righteous, that is there reprov'd. And no doubt but, 1. Many take on them, or make themselves more wise and righteous than they are ; that is, are *Hypocrites*. 2. As Righteousness is taken materially and in common estimation, so a man may be too righteous. He may be too rigorous ; which is called *Justice* ; and too much in grief, or fear, or trouble, and

and too much in any outward act that goeth under the *name* of *duty*. But it is not then truly and formally *duty* and *righteousness*, but *sin*. As to *fast* to the disabling the body for Gods service. To *pray* when we should *hear*: To *hear* when we should be about some greater work of *Mercy* or *necessity*: To neglect our outward labour and calling on pretence of *Religion*: To set up *sacrifice* against or before *mercy*: To *sorrow* when we should *rejoyce*: To *meditate* and *fear*, and *grieve*, beyond what the *brain* can bear, till it distract us: This is called, being *righteous over-much*: As also to make us a *Religion* of our own *Inventions*, and to overdo with will-worship and the traditions of men, as the *Pharisees* and *Papists*. But indeed this is not *Righteousness* but *sin*: To be formally over-much *righteous*, is a contradiction, and impossible. For to go beyond the *Rule* is *unrighteousness*: And to do too much, is to go beyond the *Rule*.

Unless you dare imagine, that God hath erred, and the Rule it self is over-strict, and the Law is unrighteous: But then how shall God judge the world? saith the Apostle, Rom. 3. 6. Shall not the Judge of all the world do righteously? Gen. 18. 25. Nay how then should he be God?

And is there any thing now left but Ignorance or Wickedness to stand up against thy speedy diligence? Away then with thy delays and sloathfulness. If thou wilt serve God with all thy might, let it be seen; If thou wilt be a Christian indeed, let deeds declare it. Christianity is not a dead Opinion. If really thou live in hope of heaven, such hopes will make thee stir for the attainment. Why standest thou idle, when thou art born for work, and all thy faculties are given thee for work, and thou art Redeemed for work? (for Evangelical work.) If thou be sanctified, thou hast the Spirit of Christ, a quickning working principle within thee; which way canst thou

thou look, that thou mayst see that  
 which would shame a sloathful soul,  
 and fire a cold and frozen heart, and  
 call thee up to a speedy industry ?  
 what *quickning* words shalt thou  
 finde in *Scripture*, if thou wilt but  
 bring thy heart thither as one that is  
*willing to be quickned* ? what *power-*  
*ful commands*, what *promises*, what  
*threatnings*, what *holy examples* of  
 exceeding diligence of Christ and his  
 Apostles ? See how the Godly about  
 thee are *at work*, though the world  
 oppose them and *deride* them ! how  
*earnestly* they pray ! how *carefully*  
 they walk ! how sadly they complain  
 that they are *no better* ! And hast thou  
 not an immortal soul to save or lose  
 as well as *they* ? See what a stir the  
*proud ambitious* person makes for less  
 than nothing ? what a stir the *cove-*  
*tous* and the *voluptuous* make for a  
 sweetned draught of mortal poyson ?  
 And shall we be *idle* that are engaged  
 for *Heaven* ? Is it reason that we  
 should do less for God and our *salva-*

man, than they do for sinful pleasure  
 to damnation? You cannot mock them  
 out of their *Pride* or *Covetousness* :  
 And shall they mock thee out of thy  
*Religion*, and thy hopes of *Heaven*?  
 All the commands, and promises,  
 and threatenings of God, the most  
 powerful preaching, that, as it were,  
 sets open Heaven and Hell to them,  
 doth not prevail with fleshly men,  
 to leave the most sordid and un-  
 manly sin : And shall the words or  
 frowns of creeping dust prevail with  
 thee against the work for which thou  
 livest in the world, when thou hast  
 still at hand *unanswerable arguments*  
 from *God*, from thy *self*, from *Heaven*  
 and *Hell*, to put thee on ? Were it  
 but for thy *life*, or the *life* of thy  
 children, friend, yea or enemy, or for  
 the quenching of a fire in thy house,  
 or in the Town, wouldst thou not  
 stir and do thy best ? And wilt thou  
 be idle when eternal life lies on it ?  
 Let Satan bawl against thee by his  
 instruments. Let sensless sinners  
 talk



talk awhile of they know not what; till God hath made them change their note. Let what will be the consequent to thy flesh. These are not matters for a man much to observe, that is engaged for an *endless life*. O what are these to the things that thou art called to prosecute! Hold on then Christians in the work that you have begun. Do it *prudently*, and do it *universally*. Take it *together*, both works of *Piety*, *Justice*, and *Charity*: But do it *Now* without delay, and do it *seriously* with your *might*. I know not what cloud of darkness hath seized on those mens minds that speak against this, or what deadly damp hath seized on their hearts, that hath so benumbed and unmanned them. For my own part, though I have long lived in a sense of the preciousness of time, and have not been wholly idle in the world; yet when I have the deepest thoughts of the great everlasting *Consequents* of my work,

and

and of the uncertainty and shortness of my Time, I am even amazed to think that my heart can be so slow and senseless, as to *do no more in such a case*. The Lord knows, and my accusing wounded Conscience knows, that my sloathfulness is so much my shame and admiration, that I am astonished to think that my *Resolutions* are no stronger, my *affections* no livelier, and my *labour* and *diligence* no greater, when God is the Commander, and his Love the encourager, and his Wrath the spur, and Heaven or Hell must be the issue. O what lives should all of us live, that have things of such unspeakable consequence on our hands, if our hearts were not almost dead within us! Let who will speak against such a life, it shall be my daily grief and moan, that I am *so dull*, and *do so little*. I know that our works do not profit the Almighty, nor bear any proportion with his reward; nor can they stand in his sight, but as  
accepted.

accepted in the Lord our righteousness, and perfumed by the odour of his merits. But I know they are *Necessary*, and they are *sweet*. Without the holy employment of our faculties, *this Life* will be but a *burden* or a *dream*, and the *next* an *unexpressible misery*. O therefore that I had more of the Love of God, that my soul could get but nearer to him, and swifter move upward by Faith and Love! O that I had more of that Holy Life, and active diligence, which the serpentine *Cainish* nature doth abhor, though I had with it the scorns of all about me, and though they made me as they once did better men, as the filth of the World, and the off-scouring of all things! *1 Cor. 14. 13.* O that I had more of this *derided diligence*, and holy converse with the Lord, though my name were cast out as an evil doer, *Luke 6. 22.* and I were spit at and buffeted by those that do now but secretly reproach! Might I nearly follow

follow Christ in holiness, why should I grudge to bear his Cross, and to be used as he was used? *Mat. 26. 27. Luke 18. 32.* knowing that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; and the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, *Rom. 8. 17, 18.*

If when we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants, and must say, we have done but our duty, *Luke 17. 10.* have we not all more need of monitors to humble us for doing so much less than our duty, than to be reprehended for being too diligent and exact?

I again protest, that it is not any works of supererrogation, or humane invention, superstition, or self-appointment that I am defending, but only the accurate obeying of the Laws of God, and the utmost diligence in such obedience, for the obtaining of everlasting life. Either God hath commanded these works of Holiness,  
Justice,

Justice, and Charity, or not. If he have not, then I have done, and yeild the cause: It is only what he hath commanded that I plead for. O that before you either speak against any *Holy duty*, or your selves neglect it, you would but come to us, and soberly joyn in searching the *Holy Scriptures*, to see whether it be required there or not; and resolve but to obey it, if we prove it thence: and if it be but a matter of humane imposition, we leave you to your selves, and should desire that you may be much left to your liberty in such things; and that you place not too much of your Religion therein. But if indeed it be commanded in the Word of God, I beseech you, as you are *Christians*, and as you are *Men*, remember that whenever you blame or scorn an *holy duty*, it is God himself that you blame or scorn. If it be naught, it is long of him that did command it: The Subject must obey; should not such worms as we  
 obey

obey the infinite God that made us ? If it be a *fault to obey*, it is a *dirty* ~~rebel~~, or *disobey* ; and that must be because that God hath *no authority to command*, and that must be because *he is not God*. See whether you bring your opposition to an *holy life* ; And dare you stand to this ? Dare you as openly mock God for making these *strict and holy Laws*, as you do men for obeying them ? None but a professed Atheist dare.

Alas Sirs, it is nothing but *intoxicating prosperity*, and *sensual delights*, and *worldly diversions*, that turn your brains, and leave you not the sober use of Reason ; that makes you think well of *ungodly sloathfulness*, and makes you think so contemptuously or senselessly of a *heavenly life*. I tell you (and remember another day that you were told of it) that there is not the boldest Infidel in the world, nor the bitterest enemy to *holiness* in this Assembly, but shortly would wish they had rather been Saints in  
rags,

rage, with all the scorn and cruelty that malice can inflict on such, than to have braved it out in pride and gallantry, with the neglect of the great everlasting things. I tell you again, there is not an ungodly wretch that heareth me, but ere long would give a world if he were owner of a holy heart and life, that he had spent his dayes in holy watchful preparations for his change, which he spent for that which will deceive him and forsake him.

Methinks I even see how you will passionately rage against your selves, and tear your hearts with self-revenge, ( if grace prevent it not by a more safe repentance ) when you think too late how you lived on earth, and what golden times of grace you lost, and vilified all that would not lose them as foolishly as you. If Repentance unto life made *Paul* so call himself foolish, disobedient, deceived, and exceeding mad, ( Tit. 3. 3. Acts 26. 11. ) you may imagine how

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*tormenting Repentance* will make you call your selves too late.

O Sirs, you cannot now conceive, while you sit here in health, and ease, and honour, what different thoughts will *then* possess you of a holy and unholy life! How mad you will think them that had but *one lifes time of preparation* for *eternal life*, and desperately neglected it: And how sensible you will *then* be of the wisdom of *Believers*, that *knew* their *Time*, and *used* it while they had it! *Now wisdom is justified of all her children*: but *then* how sensibly will it be justified of all its *enemies*! O with what gripes will undone souls look back on a life of mercy and opportunities, thus basely undervalued, and slept away in dreaming idlenets, and fooled away for things of nought.

The language of that damned rich man, *Luke 16.* may help you in your *predictions*. O how will you wonder at your selves that ever you could be



so blind and senseless, as to be no more affected with the warnings of the Lord, and with the forethoughts of everlasting joy or misery ! To have but *One small part* of *Time* to do *all that ever must be done* by you for *Eternity*, and say *all that ever you must say* for your own or others souls, and that this was spent in worse than nothing ! To have but *One uncertain life*, in which you must run the race that wins or looseth Heaven for ever ; and that you should be tempted by a thing of nought, to lose that *One irrecoverable opportunity*, and to sit still, or run another way, when you should have been *making haste with all your Might* ! O sirs, the thoughts of this will be *other kind* of thoughts another day than now you feel them ; you cannot now *think* how the thoughts of this will then affect you ! That you *had a Time* in which you might have *Prayed*, with promise of acceptance, and had no hearts to take that time !

That

That Christ was offered you as well as he was offered them that entertained him ; that you were called on and warn'd as well as they, but obstinately despised and neglected all ! That Life and Death were set before you, and the everlasting joyes were offered to your choice, against the charms of sinful Pleasures, and you might have freely had them if you would, and were told that Holiness was the only way, and that it must be *Now or Never*, and yet that you chose your own destruction ! These thoughts will be *part of Hell* to the ungodly. They will wonder that *Reason* could be so *unreasonable* ; and they that had the common wit of man in other matters, should be so far beside themselves in that which is the only thing that it's commendable to be wise for ; that such sottish *Reasonings* should prevail with them against the clearest-light, and *nothing* should be preferred before *all things*, and arguments fetcht from *chaff* and *dung*,

*dung*, should conquer those that were  
 fercht from *Heaven* ! O what heart-  
 renting thoughts will these be, when  
*Eternity* shall afford them leisure for  
 an impartial review ! Yea that they  
 should deceive *others* also with such  
 a gross deceit, and scorn at all that  
 would not be as mad as they : that  
 being drunken with the worlds de-  
 lusion, they should abuse all that  
 were truly sober ; that the one thing  
*needful*, should seem to them a *need-  
 less thing* ! That their tongues should  
 plead for these delusions of their wic-  
 ked hearts, and they should be ene-  
 mies to those that would not be  
 enemies to God, and to themselves,  
 and cast away their Time and Souls  
 as *they* did ! They will wonder with  
 self-indignation, what could bewitch  
 them into so great unreasonableness,  
 below a man, against the *light of na-  
 ture*, as well as of supernatural reve-  
 lation.

Honourable and beloved Hearers,  
 I beseech you do not take it ill, that  
 I speak

speak so much of these matters that  
 are so unpleasant and unwelcom  
 to unbelieving, careless, carnal hearts:  
 It is that I may prevent all this  
 in time, by the awakenings of true  
 Repentance: And O that this might  
 be the success! That I might hear  
 by your penitent Confessions, and  
 see by your universal speedy reformation,  
 that God hath so great  
 Mercy for you, and that these per-  
 swasions might be the means of so  
 much happiness to you, and com-  
 fort unto me! However *this Assembly*  
*shall be witnesses* that you were  
 warned: and *Conscience* shall be wit-  
 ness, that if you wast the rest of  
 your dayes in the pleasures and vani-  
 ties of this deceitful world, it was  
 not because you *could have no better,*  
 and were not *called to higher things.*  
 That if you yet *stand idle,* it is not  
 because you could not be *hired.* For  
 in the name of Christ I have called  
 you into his vineyard, and told you  
 of your work and wages, and sham'd  
 your

your excuses and objections this day. Come away then speedily from the snares of sinners, and the company of deceived hardened men, and cast away the works of darkness ! Heaven is before you ! Death is at hand ! The Eternal God hath sent to call you ! Mercy doth yet stretch forth its arms ! You have stayed too long, and abused Patience too much already : Stay no longer ! O now please God, and comfort us, and save your selves by *Resolving that this shall be the day* : and *faithfully performing of this your Resolution, Up and be doing* : Believe, Repent, Desire, Obey, and do all this with all your *Might*. Love him that you must Love for ever, and Love him with all your Soul and Might ; seek that which is truly worth a seeking, and will pay for all your cost and pains : And seek it first with all your *Might* ; Remembring still it must be *Now or Never*.

**B**Efore I conclude; I have two messages yet to deliver to the servants of the Lord: The *One* is of *Encouragement*: The *Other* of *Direction*.

I know that many of you have a *threefold trouble*, which requireth a *threefold comfort* and encouragement.

*One* is, that you have done so little of your work; but lost so much of your time already: Another is, that you are so *opposed and hindred*. And the greatest of all is, that you are yet so *dull and slow*: The cure of which must be the matter of my *Directions*.

1. For the *first*: That you have lost your *Time*, must be the matter of your *Humiliation*: But that *all is not lost*, before you see your sin and duty; but yet the patience and mercy of the Lord are attending you, and continuing your hope; this is the matter of your *comfort and encouragement*.

*ragement.* Repent therefore that you came no sooner home: But rejoyce that you are come home at last: and now be more diligent in *redeeming your time*, in remembrance of the *time already lost*: And though it must be your grief that your Master hath been deprived of so much of his service, and others of so much good which you should have done them, and that time is lost that cannot be recalled; yet it is *your comfort*, that your *own Reward* may be equal with them that have born the burthen and heat of the day: *For many that are last (in the time of their coming in) shall be first (in receiving the reward.)*

This is the meaning of that Parable in *Mat. 20.* which was spoken to encourage them that had stood out too long, and to rebuke the envy and high expectations of them that came in sooner: and it is no whit contradictory to those passages in *Mat. 25.* which intimate a *different degree of Glory* to be given to them that

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have

have different degrees of grace upon their industrious improvement. The one Parable, *Mat. 20* shews that men shall not be rewarded differently for their longer or shorter continuance in the work, but that those that came in late, and yet are found with equal holiness, shall be rewarded equally with the first: And more, if their holiness be more, which the second Parable expresth, declaring Gods purpose to give them the greatest glory, that have improved their holiness to the greatest measure. O therefore that the sense of your former unkindness might provoke you the more resolvedly to give up your selves in fervent love, and full obedience! and then you will find that your *Time is redeemed*, though it cannot be recalled; and that Mercy hath secured your full reward. O what an unspeakable Mercy is this! that if yet you will devote your selves entirely to Christ, and serve him with your might, the little time that yet remains,

he



he will take it as if you had come in at the first hour of the day !

2. And as for the *Opposition* and *hinderances* in your way, they are no other than what your Lord foretold. He hath gone before you, and conquered much more than ever you will encounter from without, (though he had not a body of sin to conquer : and in that respect the conquest of his *Spirit* in his *members*, hath the preheminance of his *personal conquest*.) He hath bid you *Be of good chear*, because he hath *Overcome the world*. If you will not take up your cross and follow him, you cannot be his Disciples, *John* 16. 33. *Luke* 15. 27, 33. Would you be *souldiers* on condition you *may not fight*, or *fight*, and yet have no *Opposition* ? Follow the Captain of your salvation. If mocking, or buffeting, or spitting in his face, or hanging him upon a Cross, or piercing his side, would have made him give up the worth of your Redemption,

you had been left to utter desparati-  
 on. The opposition that is *conquer-  
 able*, should serve but to excite your  
*courage and resolution*, in a case of  
 such *Necessity*, where you *must pre-  
 vail*, or *perish*. Have you God him-  
 self on your side, *Rom. 8. 31.* and  
 Christ your Captain, and the Spirit  
 of Christ to give you courage, and  
 the promise to invite you, and Hea-  
 ven before you, Hell behinde you,  
 and the examples of such an Army  
 of conquering believers: And shall  
 the *scorns or threats* of a crawling  
 worm prevail against all these for  
 your discouragement? You are not  
 afraid lest any man should pull down  
 the *Sun*, or dry up the *Sea*, or  
 overturn the *Earth*: And are you  
 afraid that man should *conquer God*?  
*Rom. 8. 37.* or take you out of the  
 hands of Christ? *John 10. 28, 29.*  
 Mark how they used *David*, *Psal.*  
*56 3, 4, 5, 6.* [*Every day they wrest  
 my words: all their thoughts are against  
 me for evil: They gather themselves*

together : they hide themselves : they mark my steps when they wait for my soul.] But what did he therefore fear, or fly from God ? No, [ What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee ; In God will I praise his word ; In God have I put my trust ; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. ] Isa. 51. 7, 8. [ Hearken to me ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my Law ; Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings ; For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool : but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation. ] You deserve to be shut out of Heaven, if you will not bear the breath of a fools derision for it.

3. But ( saith the self-accusing soul ) I am convinced that I ought to be laborious for my salvation, and that all this is too little that I can do : but I am dull, and cold, and negligent in all : I am far from doing it with my Might :

*I hear, and read, and pray as if I did it not, and as if I were half asleep, or my heart were away upon somewhat else. I fear I am but a lazy Hypocrite. ]*

*Answ.* I shall first speak to thy *Doubt*, and then to *Direct* thee against thy sin.

And first, you must be resolved whether your *sloath* be such as is *Predominant*, or *Mortified*: such as proveth that you are *Dead* in sin: or only such as proveth you but *diseased* and *infirm*.

And to know this, you must distinguish. 1. Between the *dulness* and *coldness* of the *Affections*, and the *Unresolvedness* and *Disobedience* of the *Soul*. 2. Between a *sloathfulness* that keepeth men from a godly life in a life of wickedness: and that which only keepeth them from some particular act of duty, or abateth the degree of their sincere affection and obedience. 3. Between that *sloath* that is the *vicious habit of the Will*, and that which is the effect of *age*, or *sickness*  
OR

or *melancholy*, or other distemper of the body.

And so the case lieth plain before you. 1. If it be not only your *Affections* that are *dull*, but your *Will* through sloath is *unresolved*; and this not only in a temptation to the abatement of some *degrees*, and the neglect of some *particular Duty*, but against a *Holy life*, and against the forsaking of your reigning sin; and this be not only through some *bodily distemper*, disabling your *Reason*, but from the *vicious Habit* of your *Wills*: then is your *sloath* a *Mortal* sign, and proves you in a *graceless* state: But if the *sloath* which you complain of, be only *dulness* of your *Affections*, and the *backwardness* of your *wills* to some *high degrees*, or *particular Duties*, and the effect of some *bodily distemper*, or the *weakness* of your *spiritual life*, while your *Wills* are *Habitually* resolved for *God* and a *Holy life*, against a *worldly fleshly life*: This is your *infirmity*, and a sin

to be lamented; but not a mark of death and gracelesness.

You will have a *backward sloathful heart* to strive with while you live. But bless God that you are *offended* with it, and would fain be delivered from it. This was *Pauls* evidence, *Rom. 7. 24.* You will have *flesh*, and *flesh* will plead for its interest, and will be striving against the Spirit; But bless God that you have also the Spirit to strive against the flesh. Be thankful that you have *Life* to feel your sickness, though you languish under it, and cannot work as healthful men; And that you are in the way to heaven, though you go not so fast as you should and would.

2. But yet though you have *Life*, it is so grievous to be *diseased*, and *languish* under such an *Infirmity* as *sloth*, that I advise you to stir up your selves to the utmost, and give not way to lazy temper; and that you may serve the Lord with all your  
Might,

Might, I recommend these few *Directions* to your observation.

*Direct. 1.* When you would be quickned up to seriousness and diligence, *have ready at hand such quickning Considerations as are here before propounded to you ; and set them before you, and labour to work them upon your hearts.* Powerful truths would have some power upon your souls, if you will but soberly apply your reason to them, and plead them with your selves, as you would do with another in any of your Reproofs or Exhortations.

*Direct. 2.* *Take heed lest any worldly design or interest, or any lusts or sensual delight, divert your minds from God and duty.* For all the powers of your soul will languish, when you should set them on work on spiritual things, and your hearts will be abroad, when you should be wholly taken up with God, if once they be entangled with worldly things. Watch therefore over them in your Callings,

lest the creature steal too deep into your affections: For if you be alive to the world, you will be in that measure dead to God.

Direct. 3. *If it be possible, live under a lively Ministry, that when your hearts go cold and dull unto the Assembly, they may come warm and quickned home.* Life cherisheth life, as fire kindleth fire. The Word and Ordinances of God are quick, powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the hearts, *Heb. 4. 12.* And therefore it may do much to make you feel. Many a thousand hath it pricked at the heart, and set them home alive, that before were dead, *Acts 2. 37.* Much more may you expect, that it should excite the principle which you have already.

Direct. 4. *If it may be, converse with lively, active, stirring Christians: But especially have one such for a bosome.*



to some friend, that will warm you when you are cold, and help to awake you when you drop asleep, and will not comply with you in a declining, lazy, and unprofitable course, *Ecles.* 4. 9, 10, 11, 12. Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour: For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; But wo to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one alone be warm? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Direct. 5.. Put not away from you the day of Death. Look not for long life. It is the Life to come that must be the Life of all your duties here: and distant things do lose their force. Set Death, and Judgement, and Eternal Life, continually as near at hand: Live in a watchful expectation of your change: Do all as dying men, and as passing to receive the recom-

recompence of endless joy or woe; and this will quicken you. To this end, go often to the *House of Mourning*, and be not unseasonably or immoderately in the house of Mirth. When you observe what is the end of all men, the heart will be made better by it, *Eccles. 7. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* But excess of carnal mirth doth infatuate men, and destroy their wisdom, seriousness, and sobriety. Keep always a sense of the brevity of life, and of the preciousness of Time, and remember that it's posting on whether you work or play: Methinks, if you forget any of the rest, this one Consideration that we have in hand, should make you bestir you *with your might*, that *It must be Now or Never.*

I shall only add two needful cautions, lest while we cure one disease, we cause another (as knowing that corrupted nature is used to run from extream into extream.)

1. *Desire and labour more for an high Estimation of things spiritual, and eternal, and a fixed Resolution, and an even and diligent endeavour, than for passionate feelings and affections. For these latter are more unconstant in the best, and depend much on the temper of the body, and are not of so great necessity as the former, though excellent in a just degree and season. (For it's possible that passion even about good things may be too much; when Estimation, Resolution, and regular Endeavours cannot.)*

2. *Be suspicious when you have the warmest and liveliest Affections, lest your judgement should be perverted by following when they should lead. It's very common for Zeal and strong Affections, even to that which is good, to occasion the mistakes of the understanding, and make men look all on one side, and think they can never go far enough from some particular sins, till ignorantly they are carried into some perhaps as great on the other hand,*

*band.* Be warned by the sad experience of *these times*, to suspect your judgements in the fervour of your affections.

And observing *these cautions*, let nothing abate your *Zeal* and *Diligence*; But whatever *Duty* is set before you, Do it with your *Might*: for it must be *Now or Never*.

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**T**Hough I know that the enmity to a holy heavenly life is so radical in corrupted nature, that all that I have said is necessary and too little; yet some I know will think it strange that I should intimate, that any that preach the Gospel are guilty of any measure of this sin, and will think that I intend by it to reflect upon some parties above the rest. But again I profess, that it is no party but the Devils party, and the ungodly party that I mean. And it's hard if you will not believe me concerning my own sense.

Nor

Nor is it my desire that any of the odiousness of Schism, Sedition, Rebellion, or Disobedience to Authority, should be so much as diminished by any mans profession of Godliness. No, I beseech you, by how much the more godly you are, by so much the more detest all these; Godliness tendeth to shame and condemn these odious sins, and not to be a cloak for them or any extenuation: Nay, what can more aggravate them, than that they should be found in the professors of Godliness? I again profess that I have no design but to plead for *serious* diligence in the Religion which we are all agreed in, and to stop the mouth of those that wickedly speak against it.

But alas, it is too evident that I have too many to speak to, that are not innocent: why else doth Scripture tell us that such there will be still to the end of the world? and that there are some that preach Christ of strife and envy, to add affliction to

to be bonds of the afflicted ! And how came holy M. Bolton to find so much work for these rebukes so lately in his time, as in his Books you find ? And can we already forget what abundance of *Antinomian* Teachers were among us, that turned out the very doctrine of practical diligence, and cried it down as a setting up our selves and our own works, and as injurious to free grace, and under pretence of exalting Christ, did set up a heartless, lifeless doctrine, that tended to turn out the life of Christianity, and taken men off their necessary diligence, as a legal dangerous thing ?

And what Ordinance of God hath not been cast out by Preachers themselves upon Religious pretences, Family-duties, Catechising, Singing of Psalms, Baptism, the Lords Supper, and which not ? And if all these were down, wherein should the practice of Religion consist ? And what abundance of Pamphlets had we

we that laboured to make the Orthodox faithful Ministry a very scorn, and deride them for their faithful service of God, and their faithfulness to their Superiours, in opposition to their unrighteous wayes? I am loth to blot my papers, and trouble your ears with the names of the *Martin-mar-Priests*, and a multitude of such others which I mean.

And let no Papist, or any Enemy of our Church, reproach us because such enemies to *Holiness* are found among us. Can it be expected that our Church should be better than the Family of *Adam*, that had a *Cain*? Or of *Noah*, that had a *Cham*? or of *Christ*, that had a *Judas*? And are there not far more enemies to seriours Godliness among the Papists themselves, than among us? One instance out of the Life of *Philip Nerius*, the Father of the Oratorians, I will put into the Preface, because it is too long to be here inserted. There is no place,

no rank of men in the world, where some of the enemies of a Holy life are not to be found, even among those that profess the same Religion in Doctrinals, with those whom they oppose. Christ and the Devil have their severall Armies; And if once the Devil disband his Soldiers, and have none to oppose a holy life, then tell me that it's a needless thing to defend it and to confute them. But I am listed under Christ, and will never give over pleading for him, till his adversaries give over pleading against him, and his Cause, as long as he continueth my liberty and duty. And blessed be the Lord, that if an Hypocritical Preacher be found among us, that secretly or openly disgraceth a diligent holy life, there are more able, holy, faithful ones to confute him both by Doctrine and by their Lives, than are to be found in any other Kingdom in the world proportionably, that ever I could hear of. And that the faithful  
Disciples



Disciples are so many, and the *Judas's* so few, how great a blessing is it to this Land, and how great an honour to his Majesties Government, and to the Church in his Dominions ! The Lord teach this sinful Nation to be thankful, and pardon their ingratitude, and never deprive them of this forfeited mercy. The Lord teach them to hearken to the Friends, and not to the Enemies of Holiness, and never to receive a wound at the heart of their Religion, however they hear their smaller differences about things circumstantial.

And now I should conclude, I am *loth to end*, for fear lest I have not yet prevailed with you ; What are you now *resolved to do*, from this day forward ? It is *work* that we have been speaking of, and *necessary work* of endless consequence, which *must* be done, and quickly done, and thoroughly done. Are you not convinced that *it is so* ? that plowing and sowing are not more necessary to your harvest,

vest, than the work of holiness in this  
 day of grace is necessary to your sal-  
 vation? You are blind if you see  
 not this: you are dead if you feel  
 it not: what then will you do? For  
 Gods sake, and for your own sake,  
 stand not demurring till time be  
 gone. It is all that the Devil desi-  
 reth, if he can but find you one  
 thing or other to be thinking, and  
 talking, and doing about, to keep you  
 from this till time be gone: and  
 then he will insult over you, and  
 then he that kept you from seeing  
 and feeling, will help you to see  
 and feel to your calamity: Then  
 the Devil will make you feel that  
 which Preachers could not make  
 you feel: and he will make you  
 think of that, and lay it close enough  
 to your hearts, which we could not  
 get you to lay to heart. Now we  
 study and preach to you in hope;  
 but then ( alas it breaks our hearts  
 to think of it ) we have done with  
 you for ever, because all hope is gone.

Then

Then the Devil may challenge a Minister [ Now do thy worst to bring this sinner to repentance: Now call to him to consider, and believe, and come to Christ: Now offer him mercy, and intreat him to accept it: Now cry to him to take heed of sin and of temptations, that he come not to this place of torments: Now tell him of the beauty or necessity of holiness, and call upon him to *turn* and *live*: Now do thy worst to rescue him from my power, and save his soul. ] Alas poor sinners! will you stop your ears, and go on in sin, and damn your selves, and break our hearts to foresee that day! Must we see the Devil go away with such a prey, and shall we not rescue your captivated souls, because you will not hear, you will not stir, you will not consent! O hear the God of Heaven, if you will not hear us, who call-eth to you, *Return*, and *live*! O hear him that shed his blood for  
souls,

souls, and tendereth you now salvation by his blood! O hear without any more delay, before all is gone, and you are gone, and he that now deceiveth you, torment you! Yet hold on a little longer in a carnal, earthly, unsanctified state, and it is too late to hope, or pray, or strive for your salvation: Yet a little longer, and mercy will have done with you for ever; and Christ will never invite you more, nor never offer to cleanse you by his blood, or sanctifie you by his Spirit! Yet a little longer, and you shall never hear a Sermon more, and never more be troubled with those Preachers that were in good sadness with you, and longed once for your conversion and salvation! O sleepy dead-hearted sinners, what should I do to shew you how near you stand to Eternity, and what is now doing in the World that you are going to, and how these things are thought on there! What should I do to make you know how time is valued, how  
 sin

sin and holiness are esteemed in the  
 world where you must live for ever !  
 What should I do to make you know  
 those things to day, which I will not  
 thank you to know when you are  
 gone hence ! O that the Lord would  
 open your eyes in time ! Could I but  
 make you know these things as Be-  
 lievers should know them, I say not  
 as those that *see them*, nor yet as  
*dreamers*, that do not regard them,  
 but as those that believe that they  
 must shortly see them, what a joyful  
 hours work should I esteem this ?  
 how happy would it be to you and  
 me ! If every word were accompa-  
 nied with tears ! If I followed you  
 home and begg'd your consideration  
 on my bare knees, or as a beggar  
 begs an alms at your doors : If this  
 Sermon cost me as many censures or  
 slanders as ever Sermon did, I should  
 not think it too dear, if I could but  
 help you to such a sight of the things  
 we speak of, that you might truly  
 understand them as they are : that  
 you

you had but a true awakened apprehension of the shortness of your day, of the nearness of eternity, and of the endless consequence of your present work; and what holy labour and sinful loytering will be thought of in the world to come for ever! But when we see you sin, and trifle, and no more regard your endless life, and see also what haste your Time is making, and yet cannot make you understand these things; when we know our selves as sure as we speak to you, that you will shortly be astonished at the review of your present sloath and folly, and when we know that these matters are not thought of in another world, as they are among the sleepy or the Bedlam sinners here, and yet know not how to *make you know it*, whom it doth so exceeding much concern, *this* a nazzeth us, and almost breaks our hearts! Yea when we tell you of things that are *past doubt*, and can be no further matter of controversie, then men have sold

fold their understandings, and betray-  
 ed their reason to their sordid lusts,  
 and yet we cannot get reasonable men  
 to know that which they cannot  
 choose but know, to know that seri-  
 ously and practically which alwayes  
 hath a witness in their breasts, and  
 which none but the profligate dare  
 deny; I tell you sinners, this, even this  
 is worse then a prison to us: It is you  
 that are our Persecutors: It's you  
 that are the daily sorrow of our  
 hearts; It's you that disappoint us of  
 our hopes, and make us lose so much  
 of the labour of our lives! And if all  
 others did as some do by us, alas, how  
 sad an employment should we have!  
 and how little would it trouble us  
 to be silenced and laid aside! If we  
 were sick of the ambitious or cove-  
 tous thirst, we should then say that  
 it is they that deny us wealth and  
 honour that disappoint us. But if  
 we are Christians, this is not our  
 case, but it is the thirst after your  
 conversion and salvation which af-  
 fecteth

I

feeteth us : and therefore it is you, even you that linger in your sins and delay repentance, and forget your home, and neglect your souls, it is you that disappoint us, and you that are our afflictors, and as much as you think\* you befriend us when you plead our cause against men of violence and rage, it is you that shall answer for the loss of our time, and labour, and hope, *and for the grieving of your Teachers hearts.*

Sinners, whatever the Devil and raging passion may say against a holy life, God and your own consciences shall be our witnesses, that we desired nothing unreasonable, or unnecessary at your hands. I know it is the master-piece of the Devils craft, when he cannot keep all Religion in contempt, to raise up a dust of controversie in the World about Names, and Forms, and Circumstances in Religion, that he may keep men busily striving about these, while Religion it self is neglected  
or



or unknown ; and that he may make men believe that they have some Religion, because they are for one side or other in these controversies : and especially that he may entice men to number the substantials of Religion it self among these lesser doubtful points, and make sinners believe that it is but the precise opinion of one party that they reject, while they reject the serious practice of all true Religion. And so the Devil gets more by these petty quarrels and controversies, occasioned by contentious empty men, than he could have done by the open opposition of Infidels, Heathens, or the prophane : so that neither I nor any man that opinionative men have a mind to quarrel with, can tell how to exhort you to the very practice of Christianity it self, but you are presently casting your thoughts upon some points wherein we are reported to differ from you, or remembering some clamors of malicious

men, that prejudice against the person of the speaker, may keep your souls from profiting to salvation by the doctrine which even your selves profess.

If this be the case of any one of you, I do not mean your consciences shall so scape the power or evidence of the truth. Dost thou talk of our differences about forms and ceremonies? Alas man, what's that to the message which we come about to thee? what's that to the business that we are preaching of? The question that I am putting to you, is not whether you will be for this form of Church-Government or for that, for a ceremony or against it; but it is, whether you will hearken in time to God and Conscience, and be as busie to provide for Heaven, as ever you have been to provide for Earth? and whether you will set your selves to do the work that you are Created and Redeemed for? This is the business that I am

sent to call you to ; what say you? will you do it, and do it seriously without delay? you shall not be able to say that I called you to a party, a faction, or some opinion of my own; or laid your salvation upon some doubtful controversie. No sinner, thy Conscience shall have no such shift for its deceit : It is godliness, serious and practical godliness that thou art called to. It is nothing but what all Christians in the World, both Papists, and Greeks, and Protestants, and all the parties among those that are true Christians, are agreed in the profession of. That I may not leave thee in any darkness which I can deliver thee from, I'll tell thee distinctly though succinctly, what it is that thou art thus importuned to ; and tell me then whether it be that which any Christian can make doubt of.

1. That which I intreat of thee, is but to live as one that verily believeth there is a God ! and that this God is the Creator, the Lord, and Ruler

of the world : and that it is incomparably more of our business to understand and obey his Laws, and as faithful Subjects to be confirmed to them, than to observe or be conformed to the Laws of man : And to live as men that do believe that this God is Almighty, and the greatest of men are less than crawling worms to him; and that he is infinitely wise, and the wisdom of man is foolishness to him; and that he is infinitely good and amiable; and the best of creatures is dung and filth in comparison of him : and that his love is the only felicity of man; and that none are happy but those that do enjoy it; and none that do enjoy it can be miserable; and that riches, and honour, and fleshly delights are brutish vanities in comparison of the eternal love of God. Live but as men that heartily believe all this, and I have that I come for; And is any of this a matter of controversy or doubt? not among Christians

I am

I am sure : not among wise men. It is no doubt to those in Heaven, nor to those in Hell, nor to those that have not lost their understandings upon earth. Live then according to these Truths.

2. Live as men that verily believe that *mankind is fallen into sin and misery* : and that all men are corrupted, and under the condemnation of the Law of God, till they are delivered, pardoned, reconciled to God, and made new creatures by a renewing, restoring, sanctifying change. Live but as men that believe that this cure must be wrought, and this great restoring change must be made upon our selves, if it be not done already. Live as men that have so great a work to look after ; And is this a matter of any doubt or controversy ? sure it is not to a Christian ; And methinks it should not be to any man else that knoweth himself, any more than to a man in a Drop-sie, whether he be diseased, when

he feels the thirst and sees the swelling. Did you but know what cures and changes are necessarily to be made upon your diseased miserable souls, if you care what becomes of them, you would soon see cause to look about you.

3. Live but as men that verily believe that you *are Redeemed by the son of God*, who hath suffered for your sins, and brought you the tidings of pardon and Salvation, which you may have if you will give up yourselves to him who is the Physician of souls, to be healed by him: Live as men that believe that the infinite love of God revealed to lost mankind in the Redeemer, doth bind us to love him with all our hearts, and serve him with all our restored faculties, and to work as those that have the greatest thankfulness to shew, as well as the greatest mercies to receive, and misery to escape: and as those that believe that if sinners that without Christ had no hope, shall

shall now love their sins and refuse to leave them, and to repent and be converted, and unthankfully reject the mercy of Salvation so dearly bought, and so freely offered them, their damnation will be doubled as their sin is doubled. Live but as men that have such Redemption to admire, such mercy to entertain, and such a Salvation to attain, and that are sure they can never scape if they continue to neglect so great Salvation, *Heb. 2. 3.* And is there any controversie among Christians in any of this? There is not certainly.

4. Live but as men that believe that *the Holy Ghost is given by Jesus Christ to convert, to quicken, to sanctifie all that he will save:* and that except you be born again of the Spirit, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, *John 3. 5. 6. Rom. 8. 9.* And that without

this no patching or mending of your lives by any common principles will serve the turn for your Salvation, or make you acceptable to God, *Heb. 11. 6.* Live as men that believe that this Spirit is given by the hearing of the Word of God, and must be prayed for, and obeyed, and not resisted, quencht and grieved. And is there any controversie among Christians in any of this? Ask those that make a mock at Holiness, Sanctification and the Spirit, whether they be not baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, and profess to believe in him as their Sanctifier, as well as in the Son their Redeemer? And then ask them whether it be not a thing that should make even a devil to tremble to come so near the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as to mock at his Office and Sanctifying work, and at the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord! *Heb. 12. 14.* and this after they are baptized and profess to believe



lieve in the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier.

5. Live but as men that believe that sin is the greatest evil, the thing which the Holy God abhorreth. And then you will never make a mock of it, as *Solomon* saith the foolish do, *Prov.* 14 9. nor say, What harm is in it?

6. Live but as men that believe no sin is pardoned without Repentance; and that Repentance is the loathing and forsaking of sin: and that if it be *true*, it will not suffer you to live wilfully in any gross sin, nor to desire to keep the least infirmity, nor to be loth to know your unknown sins.

7. Live as those that believe that you are to be members of the *Holy Catholick Church*, and therein to hold the *Communion of Saints*. And then you will know that it is not as a member of any Sect or Party, but as a holy member of this holy Church, that you must be saved: and that it

it is the name of a *Christian* which is more honourable than the name of any division or subdivision among Christians, whether Greek, or Papist, or Protestant, or Prelatist, or Presbyterian, or Independent, or Anabaptist. It is easie to be of any one of these parties; but to be a *Christian*, which all pretend to, is not so easie. It is easie to have a burning zeal for any divided party or cause: but the common zeal for the Christian Religion is not so easie to be kindled or kept alive: but requireth as much diligence to maintain it, as dividing zeal requireth to quench it. It is easie to love a party as a party: but to keep up Catholick charity to all Christians, and to live in that holy love and converse which is requisite to [a Communion of Saints] is not so easie. Satan and corrupted Nature befriend the love and zeal of faction, which is confined to a party on a controverted cause: but they are enemies to the  
love

love of Saints, and to the zeal for holiness, and to the Catholick charity which is from the Spirit of Christ. You see I call you not to division, not to side with Sects : but to live as members of a holy Catholick Church, which consisteth of all that are holy in the world : and to live as those that believe the *Communion of Saints*.

8. Live as those that believe that there is a life everlasting, where the Sanctified shall live in endless joy, and the unsanctified in endless punishment and wo : live but as men that verily believe a Heaven and a Hell, and a day of Judgement, in which all the actions of this life must be revised, and all men judged to their endless state. Believe these things heartily, and then think a holy diligence needless if you can : Then be of the mind of the deriders and enemies of godliness if you can ! If one sight of Heaven or Hell would serve without any more ado, instead of other arguments, to confute all the cavils of the  
distracted

distracted world, and to justifie the most diligent Saints in the judgement of those that now abhor them, why should not a sound belief of the same thing in its measure do the same ?

9. Live but as those that believe this life is given us as the only Time to make preparation for eternal life : and that all that ever shall be done for your salvation, must be Now, just Now, before your time is ended : Live as those that know ( and need not faith to tell them ) that this Time is short and almost at an end already, and stayeth for no man, but as a Post doth haste way. It will not stay while you are trimming you, or sporting you : It will not stay while you are taking up the Stage-plays, in complements, in idle visits, or any impertinent, needless things : It will not tarry while you spend yet the other year, or month, or day, in your worldliness or ambition, or in your lusts and sensual delights, and put off your Repentance to another time.

time. O sirs, for the Lords sake do but live as men that must shortly be buried in the grave, and their souls appear before the Lord, and as men that have but this little Time, to do all for their everlasting life, that ever must be done. O live as men that are sure to die, and are not sure to live till to morrow: And let not the noise of pleasure or worldly business, or the chat or scorns of miserable fools, bear down your reason, and make you live as if you knew not what you know: or as if there were any doubt about these things. Who is the man, and what is his name, that dare contradict them, and can make it good? O do not sin against your knowledge: Do not stand still and see your glass running, and Time making such haste, and yet make no more haste your selves, than if you were not concerned in it: Do not, O do not slumber, when Time and Judgement never slumber, nor sit still when you have so much to do,  
and

and know all that is now left undone must be undone for ever ! Alas sirs, how many questions of exceeding weight have you yet to be resolved in ? whether you are truly sanctified ? whether your sins be pardoned ? whether you shall be saved when you die ? whether you are ready to leave this world, and enter upon another ? I tell you the answering of these and many more such questions, is a matter of no small *difficulty* or *concernment*. And all these must be done in this little and uncertain time. It must be *Now* or *Never*. Live but as men that believe and consider these certain unquestionable things.

no. Lastly, Will you but live as men that believe that the world and the flesh are the deadly enemies of your salvation : And that believe, that if any man love the world, ( so far ) the love of the Father is not in him, 1 *John* 2. 15, 16. And as men that believe, that, if ye live after the flesh ye shall die ; but if by the

the Spirit ye mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live, *Rom. 8. 13.* and that those that are in Christ Jesus, and are freed from condemnation, are such as walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, *Rom. 8. 1.* And that we must make no provision for the flesh to satisfie the will or lusts thereof, *Rom. 13. 10.* and must not walk in gluttony and drunkenness, in chambring and wantonness, in strife and envying, *vers. 13.* but must have our hearts where our treasure is, *Matth. 6. 21.* and converse in Heaven, *Phil. 3. 18, 19, 20.* and being risen with Christ, must seek the things that are above, and set our affections on them, and not on the things that are on earth, *Col. 3. 1, 2, 3.*

Sirs, will you say that any of this is our singular opinion, or matter of controverlie and doubt? Are not all Christians agreed in it? Do you not your own selves profess that you believe it? Live then but as those that do believe it, and condemn not your selves

selves in the things that you confess.

I tell thee, if now thou wilt refuse to live according to these common acknowledged truths, thou shalt never be able to say before the Lord, that mens controversie about a ceremony, or Church-Government, or the manner of worship, were the things that hindered thee! But all sorts and Sects shall be witnesses against thee, and condemn thee; for they all agreed in these things: even the bloodiest Sect, that imprison, and torment, and kill others for their differences in smaller matter, are yet agreed with those that they persecute and murder, about these things: Papists are agreed in them, and Protestants are agreed in them: All the Sects that are now quarrelling among us, and in the world, are agreed in them, who are but meet for the name of Christians. All these will be ready to bear witness against the prophane, the sensual, the sloathful neglecter of God and his Salvation,  
and



and to say, we all confessed, notwithstanding our other differences, that all these things were certain truths, and that mens lives should be ordered according unto these.

But if yet you pretend controversie to cover your malignity or ungodliness, I will go a little further, and tell you that in the *Matter* as well as in the *Principles*, it is things that we are all agreed in, which I call you to, and which the ungodly do refuse: He briefly name them.

1. One part of your work which we urge you to do with all your might, is seriously and soberly to consider often of all these truths before-mentioned, which you say you do believe: And is it any controversie with reasonable men whether they should use their reason? or with believers, whether they should consider and lay to heart the *weight* and use of the things which they believe?

2. Another part of your work, is

to love God with all your soul and might; and to make him your delight, and to seek first his Kingdom, and the righteousness thereof; and to set your affections on the things above, and to live on earth as the Heirs of Heaven: And is there any controversie among Protestants, Papists, or any about this?

3. Another part of your work is, to see the honouring of God in the world, the promoting of his Kingdom and Government in your selves and others, the doing of his will, and obeying of his Laws: And is there any controversie in this?

4. Another part of your work is, to mortifie the flesh, and reject its conceits, and desires, and lusts, which resist the foresaid obedience to God; and to cast out the inordinate *love* and *care* of worldly things: to refuse the Counsels, the Commands, the Will, the enticements and perswasions of man, which contradict the Com-  
mands.

mands and Will of God : and to forsake all that you have in the world rather than forsake your dear Redeemer, and hazard your Salvation by any wilful sin : To take up your Cross and follow Christ through a life of suffering to glory ; I know there is difficulty enough in all this, and that flesh will repine against it and abhor it. But is there any controversie about it among any true believers ? Is not all this the expresse Command of God, and necessary to Salvation ?

5. Another part of your work is to avoid temptations, and fly from the occasions and appearances of evil ; and not only to avoid that which is directly evil it self, but that also which would draw you into evil (as far as you can) and to keep as far as may be from the brink of Hell and danger, and to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, nor be companions with them, but reprove them, and mourn for the

unclean and wicked conversation of the world. This is it that we intreat of you ; And is there any matter of controversie in all this ?

6. Another part of the work which we call you to, is, to redeem this little Time that is allotted you ; To make the best of it, and improve it to the greatest furtherance of your Salvation : To lose none of it, upon unprofitable things : To spend it in those works which will comfort you most when time is gone ; If it will be more comfortable to you in the day of Judgement, that you have spent your Time in Plays, and sports, and idleness, and worldly cares, and pleasures, than in serving God, and preparing for another life, then hold on, and do so to the end : But if it will not, then do what you would hear of, seeing you must hear of it : spend none of your Time in idleness and unfruitful things, till you have no better and more necessary things to spend it in, and till you have Time

to spare from more important work. This is our request to you, that you would not lose one hour of your precious Time, but spend it as those that have lost too much, and have but a little more to spend in preparation for Eternity. And is this any Schismatical or factious motion? Is there any thing controvertible, or which any Christian can speak against, in any of this?

7. Another part of your work is, to search the Scripture as that which containeth your directions for eternal life, *Jahn* 5. 39. To love the Word of God more than thousands of Gold and silver, and prefer it before your necessary food, *Psal.* 119. 72. *Job* 23. 12. and to meditate in it day and night, as that which is your pleasure and delight, *Psal.* 1. 2. and as that which is able to make you wise unto Salvation, *2 Tim.* 3. 15. and to build you up, and give you an inheritance among the sanctified, *Acts* 20. 32. That you  
lay

lay up the Word of God in your hearts, and teach them diligently to your Children, and talk of them when you sit in your houses, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up, *Dent. 6. 6, 7. and 11. 18, 19.* that so you and your households may serve the Lord, *Josh. 24. 15.* This is the work that we call you to: And is there any thing that a Christian can make a controversie of in all this? Is there any thing that Protestants are not agreed of?

8. Another part of your work is, that you guard your tongues, and take not the name of God in vain, and speak no reproaches or slanders against your Bretheren, and that no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouths, but that which is good to the use of edifying, and that it may minister grace unto the hearers. *Ephes. 4. 29.* and that fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness be not once named among you, as  
 yet becometh

becometh Saints: neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks, *Eph. 5. 3, 4*. And is there any thing of doubt or controversie in this?

9. Another part of the work which we perswade you to, is to pray continually, *1 Thes. 5. 17*. and not to wax faint, *Luke 18. 1*. to be fervent and importunate with God, as those that know the greatness of their necessity, *Luke 18. 6, 7*. *Jam. 5. 15*. That you pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, *Eph. 6. 18*. and in every thing by prayer and supplication to make known your requests to God, *Phil. 4. 6*. that you pray for Kings and all in Authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2*. And is there any thing in all this that any Christian can deny?

10. Lastly, the work we call you to, is, to love your neighbours as yourselves, and to do to others as you would

would have them (*arbitrio sano*) do to you ! To scorn, deride, molest, imprison, slander, or hurt no man, till you would be so used your selves on the like occasion. To rejoyce in other mens profit and reputation as your own. To envy none, to hate no man, to wrong none in their persons, estates, or names ; To preserve the chastity, honour, and estate of your neighbour as your own. To love your enemies, and forgive them that wrong you, and pray for them that hate, and hurt, and persecute you. This is your work : And is there any thing of faction, schism or controverfie in this ? No, you shall shortly be convinced, that the differences and controversies of believers, and the many opinions about Religion, were a wretched hypocritical pretence for your neglect and contempt of the substance of Religion, about which there was no difference, but all parties were agreed in the confession of the truth, however hypocrites would  
not



not live according to their own professions.

But perhaps you'll say, that there is such difference in the *Manner* yet among them that agree in the *Principles* and the *Matter*, that you know not which way God is to be worshipped?

I answer, 1. Do you practice as aforesaid, according to the Principles and matter agreed on, or not? If you do not, it is but gross hypocrisie to pretend disagreements in the *Manner*, as an excuse for your contempt or omission of the *Matter*, which all agree in. Forsooth your families shall be *prayerless*, and you will make a jeast of *serious prayer*, because some pray on a book, and some without, and some that are wisest, think that either way is lawful. Will God be deceived by such silly reasonings as these?

2. But this shall not hide the nakedness of your impiety. Will you also in the *Manner* of your obedience,

but go so far as all *Christians* are agreed in? I will briefly then give you some particular instances.

1. The work of God must be *done with reverence*, in his fear: not like the common works of men, with a common careless frame of mind: God will be *sanctified of all that draw near him*, *Lev. 10. 3.* He will be served as God, and not as man: He will not be prayed to with a regardless mind, as those do that can divide their tongues from their hearts, and say over some customary words while they think of something else. It's a dreadful thing for dust to speak to God Almighty; and a dangerous thing to speak to him as slightly and regardlessly, as if we were talking to one of our companions. It becometh a believer to have more of the fear of God upon his heart, in his *ordinary converse* in the world, than hypocrites and formalists have in their most solemn prayers. Knowest thou the difference between

between God and man? Put then such a difference between God and man in thy addresses, as his Majesty requireth. And see also that thy family compose themselves to a *reverent behaviour*, when they joyn with thee in the worshipping of God. What have you to say now against this *reverent manner* of behaviour? Is there any thing controvertible in this?

2. It is also requisite that you be *serious* and *sober* in all the service you perform to God. Do it not ludicrously, and with half a heart! Be as much more fervent and serious in seeking God and your salvation, than you are in seeking worldly things, as God and your Salvation is better than any thing in the world: Or if that be beyond your reach (though else there is reason for it) at least let the *greatest things* have the *greatest power* upon your hearts. You cannot

pray more fervently for Heaven than Heaven deserveth. O let but the excellency and greatness of your work appear in the *serious manner* of your performance. I hope you cannot say that this is any point of controversie, unless it be a controversie whether a man should be an hypocrite, or be *serious* in the Religion which he doth profess.

3. It is requisite that your service of God be performed *understandingly*, Psal. 47.7. 1 Cor. 14. 15. God delighteth not in the blind devotion of men that know not what they do. Prayers not understood are indeed no prayers: for no mans desire goeth further than his knowledge. And he expresseth not his desires that knoweth not what he expresseth himself. Nor can he expect the concurrence of another mans desires, that speaketh what another understandeth not. The word that is not understood cannot  
sink

sink into the heart and sanctifie it: or  
 if it be not well and soundly under-  
 stood, it's easily stole away by the  
 tempter, *Matth. 13. 19, 23.* If un-  
 derstanding be necessary in our com-  
 mon conversations, much more in  
 our holy addresses to the Al-  
 mighty, *Prov. 17. 27.* *A man of un-  
 derstanding is of an excellent Spirit:*  
 but God hath no pleasure in fools or  
 in their Sacrifices, *Eccles. 5. 1, 4.*  
 nor is pleased with a Parrot-like lip-  
 service, which is not understood. He  
 saith in detestation of the hypocrites,  
*This people draweth near unto me with  
 their mouth, and honoureth me with  
 their lips, but their heart is far from  
 me, Mat. 15. 8, 9.* I hope then when  
 we call you to serve God in judge-  
 ment and with understanding, we call  
 you to nothing that a Christian should  
 make question of.

4. God is a Spirit, and they that  
 serve him must serve him in Spirit  
 and in truth, *John 4. 24.* The Fa-  
 ther seeketh such to worship him, *v. 23.*

He calleth for the *heart*: he looketh for the inward desires of the soul: He converseth with minds that are *abstracted* from vanity, and are *seriously* taken up in attending him, and are intent upon the work they do: The *carkass* of a *Prayer* separated from the *Life* of it, stinketh before the holy God. As he will be *loved*, so will he be *served*, with all the *heart*, and *soul*, and *might*. And do we call you then to any thing that is doubtful, when we call you to the Spiritual worshiping of God?

5. Yet we maintain that the *body* hath its part in the *Service* of God: as well as the *soul*, and the *body* must express the inward reverence and devotion of the soul; though not in a way of *hypocritical ostentation*, yet in a way of *serious adoration*. The bowing of the knee, the uncovering of the head, and reverent deportment, and whatsoever nature, or common use, and holy institution hath made an expression of holy affecti-  
ons,

ons, and a decent and grave behaviour of our selves, should be carefully observed in the presence of the most High, and the holy things of God more reverently to be respected than the presence of any mortal man. And the rather, because that a grave, and reverent, and holy manner of deportment in Gods worship, reflecteth upon the heart, and helpeth us in our inward and spiritual devotion: and it helpeth the beholders, and awakeneth them to reverent thoughts of God, and holy things; which a regardless, and common manner of deportment would extinguish. And its no dishonour to reverent behaviour, that it is the use of *Hypocrites*, but rather an honour to it; For it is something that is good that the *Hypocrite* useth for the cloak of his secret emptiness or evil. If there were nothing good in reverend behaviour before God, it would not serve the *Hypocrites* turn. As it is a commendation

to long prayer, that the Pharisees made it their pretence for the devouring of Widdows houses: And those that call them hypocrites that are much in holy exercises and speeches, should consider, that if holy exercises and speeches were not good, they were not fit for the hypocrites design; evil will not be a fit cloak for evil: that which the hypocrite thinks necessary to the covering of his sin, we must think more necessary to the cure of our sin and the saving of our souls; The way to avoid hypocrisie is not by running into impiety and prophaness: we must do more than the hypocrite, and not less, else he will rise up in judgement against you, and condemn you, if he would do more to seem good, than you would do to be good, and to please your Maker: if a Pharisee will pray longer to colour his oppression, than you will do to attain salvation. The mischief of hypocrisie is, that, the soul  
of



of Religion is wanting, while the *corps* is present: And will you cast away both *soul and body*: both *inside and outside*, in opposition to *hypocrisie*? If others do seem to love God when they do not, will you therefore not so much as seem to do it? So here about reverence in the service of God: The *hypocrite* should not exceed the *sincere* in any thing that is truly good. This is the manner of Gods service, that I perswade you to, and to no other: And is there any thing of controversie in this? Prefer but the Spiritual part, and know but what that meaneth, [*I will have mercy and not sacrifice*] that so you may not condemn the *innocent*, and you shalt never say that we will be more backward than you to *decency*, and *reverent* behaviour in Gods service.

6. God will be served in *Purity* and *Holiness*, with cleansed hearts and hands, and not with such

such as remain defiled with the guilt of any wilful sin, He abhorreth the sacrifice of the wicked and disobedient. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, his prayers are abominable, Prov. 28. 9. and 15. 8. & 21. 27. Isa. 1. 13. Eccles. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. [ To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord, (to oppressing wicked men) Isa. 1. 11. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination to me: the new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting, &c. ver. 12, 13. And when you spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; yea when you make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood; Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do.

do well, seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord.]

To play the glutton, or drunkard, or filthy fornicator in the day time, and then to come to God at night, as if it were to make him amends by an hypocritical prayer; to blaspheme Gods name, and oppose his Kingdom and Government in yourselves and others, and to do your own will, and hate and scorn them that do his will, and study his will that they may do it, and then to [pray that Gods name may be hallowed, his Kingdom come, and his will be done] is an abusing God, and not serving or pleasing him. Live according to your prayers, and let your lives shew as well as your words what it is that you desire. This is the service of God that we call you to: And can you say that there is any thing controvertible in all this? Are there any men of any party among Christ-

Christians, or sober Infidels that dare contradict it ?

7. God will be served *entirely* and *universally* : in all his commands; and with all your faculties ; in works of *Piety, Justice, and Charity*, which must never be separated ? you must not pretend your *Charity* against duties of *Piety* ; for God is to be preferred in your estimation, love and service ; and all that is done for *man*, must be done for *his sake*. You must not set up duties of *Piety*, against duties of *Justice, Charity, and Sobriety* : It is not *true Piety* that will not bring forth these. God must be *loved above all*, and our *neighbour as our selves*; and these *two sorts* of love are inseparable. Do *all the good* you can to *all* while you have opportunity ; especially to *them of the household of faith*, Gal. 6. 10. What good you would *hear of* in the day of your accounts, that *do now*, speedily, diligently, and sincerely, according to your power. Say not, I may come to want my self, but [*cast thy bread*  
upon

upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many dayes; give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth, Eccles. 11. 1, 2. ] and whether all may not quickly be taken from thee; and then thou wilt wish thou hadst done good with it while thou hadst it, and lent it to the Lord, and trusted him with thy remainder who intrusted thee with his blessings; and hadst made thee friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when all fail they might receive thee into the everlasting habitations. Drop not now and then a scant and grudging alms, as if thou wert a loser by it, and God must be beholden to thee; but believe, that the greatest gain is to thy self, and look after such bargain, and do good as readily, and gladly, and liberally, as one that verily expecteth a full reward in Heaven. This is part of the service of God that we exhort you to, even to visit, and relieve, and love Christ in his members.

bers and brethren (*Mat. 25.*) and is there any thing of *doubt* or *controverſie* in all this?

8. Moreover, God will be ſerved, with *Love, and willingneſſe, and delight*: It is the moſt gaintful, honourable, bleſſed, and pleaſant work in the world, which he hath appointed you, and not a *toileſome* task or ſlavery: and therefore it is not a Melancholy, pining, troubleſome courſe of life that we perſwade you to, under the name of Godlineſſe; but it is to rejoyce in the Lord, and to live in the joyful expectations of Eternal Life, and in the ſence and aſſurance of the Love of God. If you could ſhew us any probability of a more pleaſant and joyful life on Earth, than that which ſerious Holineſſe doth afford, I ſhould be glad with all my heart to hearken to you. I am ready to tell you what is the ground of *our comforts*, which faith revealeth: If you will come, and ſoberly debate the caſe, and ſhew us the mat-  
ter.

ter and ground of *your comforts*, which you have or hope for in any other way : if *yours* prove greater, and better, and surer than the *joyes of faith*, we will hearken to you, and be of your mind and side.

The matter of the *joyes* of a *Believer* is, that all his sins are pardon-  
ed ; that God is reconciled to him in *Christ* ; that he hath the promise of God, that all things, even the greatest sufferings, shall work together for his good ; that he is alwayes in the love, and care, and hands of God ; that he hath leave to draw near him by holy prayer, and open his heart to him in all his straits and wants ; that he may solace himself in his praises and Thanksgiving, and in other parts of holy worship ; that he may read and hear his holy Word, the sure discovery of the will of God, and Revelation of the things unseen, and the Charter of his Inheritance ; that he may exercise his soul in the serious believing thoughts

thoughts of the Love of God revealed in the wonderful work of our Redemption, and of the person, and office, and grace of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; and that he may love that God that hath so wonderfully loved him; that he hath the Spirit of God to quicken and actuate his soul to supply his spiritual defects, and kill his sins, and help him to Believe, to Love, to Rejoyce, to Pray: that this Spirit is Gods Seal upon him, and the earnest of everlasting life; that *Death* shall not kill his hopes, nor end his happiness, but that his felicity and fullest joy beginneth, when that of worldlings hath an end, and their endless misery begins; that he is delivered from everlasting torment by the redemption of Christ, and the sanctification of the spirit; that Angels will attend his departing soul into the presence of his Father; that he shall be with his glorified Redeemer, and behold his Glory; that his body shall be raised

to



to everlasting life : that he shall be justified by Christ from all the accusations of the Devil, and all the slanders of the malicious world; that he shall live with God in endless Glory, and see and enjoy the Glory of his Creator, and shall never more be troubled with enemies, with sin or sorrow, but among his holy ones, shall perfectly and most joyfully love and praise the Lord for ever.

*These* are the matter of a *Believers* joy : *These*, purchased by Christ, revealed in his Word, sealed by his Miracles, his Blood, his Sacraments, and his Spirit, are our comfort. *This* is the *Religion*, the *Labour* that we invite you to: It is not to *despair*, nor to some dry unprofitable toil, nor to self-troubling, grieving, miserable melancholly, nor to costly Sacrifices, or idle Ceremonies, or irrational Service, such as the Heathens offered to their Idols ; it is not to cast away all mirth and comfort, and to turn unsociable, and morose, and sowe :  
but

but it is to the greatest joyes that the world alloweth, and nature is here capable of, and reason can discern and own: It is to begin a truly merry sociable life: It is to fly from fear and sorrow, in flying from sin and Hell, and from the consuming wrath of God: It is to the foretaste of everlasting joyes, and to the beginnings of eternal life. This is the labour, the Religion which we would have you follow with all your Might.

If you have *better* things to seek, and follow, and find, let us see them, that we may be as wise as you. If you have not, for your souls sake, make not choise of vanity, which will deceive you in the day of your necessity.

But you must not think to make us believe that a great house, or a horse, or a whore, or a feast, or a flatterer, or fine cloaths, or any childish toyes, or brutish filthiness, are more comfortable things than Christ, and Everlasting Life, or that it is  
sweeter

sweeter and better to love a harlot, or lands, or money, than to love God, and Grace, and Glory: nor that any thing that will go no further than the Grave with you, is as good as that which will endure to Eternity; nor that any pleasure which a dog or swine hath, is equal to the delights of the Angels of Heaven: If you would have us of *your mind*, you must not be of *this mind*, nor perswade us to such horrible things as these. But we profess to you and all the world, that we are not so in love with *sorrows* or *sorrowfulness*, nor so fallen out with *joy* and *pleasures*, as to choose a life of *miserable sadness*, or refuse a life of *true delight*. If we could hear from any man, or find by the most diligent enquiry, that there is a more full, and sweet, and rational, and satisfactory, and durable delight to be had in any other way than that of *serious faith and holiness*, which Christ in Scripture hath revealed to us, we are like enough to hearken after it.

But

But can the distracted sensual world believe that it's sweeter and happier to ruffle it out in fleshly gallantry and sport, and to rage against the godly for a while, till the vengeance of God lay hold upon them, and give them their reward, than to live in the love of God, and wait in patience for the performance of Gods promise of everlasting joy? Oh what a thing is fleshly passion, and raging sensuality, and blind unbelief! The Lord have mercy upon deluded sinners; the Devils business is to turn the world into a *Bedlam*; and alas, how strangely hath he prevail'd! That so many men can take their *greatest misery* for their *happiness*, and the *only happiness* for an *intolerable life*! Yea, and be *so angry* with all that are not of *their mind*, and will not set as *much* by filch and foolery, and as *little* by God and Glory as they! Like the Noble man that was Lunatick, or mad by fits, and whenever he was mad, he would swear all  
were

were mad that said not as he said, and would make all his servants be sent to *Bedlam* that would not imitate him, and there they must lie as mad men till their Lord was recovered from *his madness*. So are Gods servants used and talkt of in the world, as if they were besides themselves, as long as the world is uncured of its madness. As the *Man* is, so is *his judgement*, and such is *his relish*, and *desire*, & *delight*: When I was a child, I had far more desire to fill my pin-box, than now I have to fill my purse, and accounted it a greater treasure, and had much more delight and contentment in it. And alas, we may remember since we were strangers to the relish of Heavenly things, that we found more pleasure in that of which we are now ashamed, than we did in the most high and excellent things. Let us therefore pitty and pray for those that are distempered with the same disease.

I have been longer on this than I thought

thought to have been, because men think that we call them from *all Mirth, and Joy, and Pleasure*, to a *sowre, heavy, melancholy* life, when we call them to *serious diligence* for their salvation. As if levity and folly were the only friends to *Pleasure*, and it were only to be found in childish, worthless, transitory thing. And as if the greatest everlasting Happiness were no matter of true *Delight*, nor *Seriousness*, or *Diligence*, a friend to *Joy*.

9. Moreover, as to the *manner*, God will be served with *absolute self-resignation*, without *Exceptions, Limitations, or Reserves*: Not with the leavings of the flesh, nor with a *Proviso* that you may not suffer by your Religion, or be poor, or *despised*, or *abused* by the world: But with *self-denial* you must lay down all the *fleshes interest* at his feet; & you must take up your Cross, and follow a suffering Christ to glory. You must serve him as those that are wholly His,  
and

and not your own, and *have* nothing but what is His, and therefore nothing to be *excepted, reserved* or *saved from him*; but must be content that *you* and all your interest be in his hands, and *saved by him*, if saved at all. I know these terms seem *hard* to flesh and blood (and should Heaven be the Crown and reward to them that have undergone no tryal for it? ) But here is nothing but what is *past* all *controversie*, and all Christians do confess is the Word of Christ.

10. Lastly God will be served *resolvedly* and *constantly* : If you will *reign*, you must *conquer* and *indure to the end*. *Opposition* you must expect; and overcome it, if you would not be overcome. It is not good beginnings that will serve turn, unless you also *persevere*, and fight out the good fight of faith, and finish your course, and patiently wait to the last breath, for the Crown of Righteousness, which the Righteous

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Judge will give the Conquerours, when the unbelieving world shall say of all their *Delight* and *Hope*, [ *It's past and gone, we shall never see or taste it more* ] but must now taste of that endless wrath of God which we were treasuring up, when we should have workt out our salvation.

Well Sirs, I have all this while been discribing to you, both as to the *Principles*, the *Matter* and the *Manner*, what that Religion and Service of God is, in which you must labour with all your might : that you may see that it is no factious or private opinions or practices that we call you to do ; and that your consciences may no longer be deluded with the pretences of mens different opinions in Religion; and that the names of Prelatical, Presbyterian, Puritan, Papist, nor any other sounding in your ears, may not so distract and doat you, as to make you forget the name of *Christian* which you have all undertaken, nor what the



the Christian Religion is. You see now that it is nothing ( no not a syllable or tittle ) which all sober Christians are not agreed in, that we perswade you to do as the work of your Religion : And therefore I tell you again here, before that God that shall be your Judge, and that Conscience that shall be as a thousand witnesses, that if you will go on in ungodly worldly lives, and refuse the *serions diligence* of Christians in *this Religion* which *your selves profess*, it shall be so far from being any excuse or ease to you, that there were *Hypocrites*, or *Hereticks*, or *Schismaticks*, or *different Opinions in Religion* in the world, that this very thing shall aggravate your sin and condemnation, that all these *Hypocrites*, *Schismaticks*, or *differing parties in the Church*, did agree in the confession of *all these things*, and yet for all that you would not practise them : no nor practise what *your selves confessed* : All these

Parties or Sects shall rise up against the sensual and prophane ungodly sinner, and say, [ Though we were ignorant or doubtful of many other things, yet we are all agreed in these : we gave our concurrent testimony of them: we tempted no man to doubt of these, or to deny them. ] If you will *err more* than an *Hypocrite* or a *Schismatick*, and be far worse than those that are such, or you account such, and think to excuse it, because they erred in lesser things, it is as if the Devil should excuse his sin by saying, [ Lord thy Saints did none of them love thee as they should, and Hypocrites did but *seem* to love thee, and therefore I thought I might hate thee and set against thy wayes.

*BUT* (saith the ungodly sensualist ) *I will never believe that God delighteth in long and earnest prayers : or that he is moved by the passions or the words of men ; and therefore I take this but for babling, which you call the serious diligence of Believers,*

*lievers, in their serving God ]*

To this impious objection, I return these several answers.

1. Suppose this *were true* as you imagine, what's this to you that serve God *no way at all* with any *serions diligence*? that live in sensuality, and wilful disobedience to his Laws, and do more for your bodies than for your souls, and for temporal things than for eternal?

2. Who do you think is likest to understand Gods mind, and what is pleasing to him? Himself or you? Is any thing more plainly commanded in Gods word than *praying with frequency, fervency, and importunity*, Luk. 18. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. 1 Thes. 5. 17. Jam. 5. 16. And will you tell God that he hath but dissembled with you, and told you that he is pleased with that which is not pleasing to him?

3. And what is the reason of your unbelief? forsooth, because God is not moved with humane words or passions! I grant he is not. But what

of that ? Hath prayer no other use but to move God ? It is enough, 1. That it moveth us, and fitteth us to recieve his mercies. 2. And that God hath made it *necessary* to the *effect*, and a means or condition without which he will not give the blessing. Do you think ( if you Judge but by naeural reason ) that a person is as fit for a mercy that knoweth not the want or worth of it, and would not be thankful for it if he had it, as one that valueth it, and is disposed to thankfulness and improvement ? And do you not know that holy prayer is, nothing but the actuating of holy desires, and the exercise of all those graces which are suited to the due estimation and improvement of the mercy. And is it not the way when we would draw the *boat* to the *bank*, to lay hold of the *bank* and pull, as if we would draw it to the *boat* ? If God be not moved and drawn to us, it is enough that we are moved and drawn

drawn to God : And with all that God may give us his own blessings to whom and upon what terms he please, and that he hath assured us he will give them but to those that value, desire, and seek them, and that with faith, and fervency, and importunity.

And yet I may add, that God is so far above us, as that his incomprehensible essence, and blessed nature is very little known to us; and therefore though we know and confess that he hath no humane passions or imperfections, yet if he assume to himself the title of such a thing as love, desire, joy, or wrath, we must in reason believe, that though *these* are not in God as they are in man, with any imperfection; yet there is something in God that cannot fitlier be represented to man, nor be understood by man, than by the images of such expressions as God himself is pleased to use.

3. But I beseech you hearken to *Nature* it self. Doth it not teach

all rational creatures in necessity to pray to God? A storm will teach the prophaneſt Sea-man to pray, and that with continuance and fervency. The Mariners could ſay to *Jonah* in their danger [ *What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God; if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.* ] And they themselves cryed every man unto his God, *Jon. 1. 5, 6*, When thou comest to dye, and seeſt there is no more delay, nor any more hope from the pleasures of sin, or from any of thy companions or old deceits, then tell me whether nature teach thee not to cry, and cry mightily for pardon, and mercy, and help to God? Then we shall hear thee crying [ *O mercy, mercy Lord, upon a miserable sinner* ] though now thou wilt not believe that prayer doth any good.

I'll ſay no more to thee of this: If Nature be not conquered, and Grace have not forſaken thee, thou wilt be taught at home to answer  
this

this objection. Sure thou canst not easily so far conquer Reason, as to believe that there is no God. And if thou believe that there is a God, thou canst not believe that he is not to be worshipped, and that with the greatest *seriousness* and *diligence*! Nor that he is not the giver of all that thou dost want! Or that the Governour of the World regardeth not the dispositions and actions of his subjects, but will equally reward the good and bad, and give to all alike, and have no respect to mens preparations for his reward. What Heathen that believeth that there is a God, doth not believe that Prayer to him is a necessary part of his worship?

Obj. *But is not your strict observation of the Lords Day a controverted thing?*

Ans. In this also I will strip thee of this excuse. 1. Spend the Lords Day but according to the common principles of Christianity and Reason, and it shall suffice: Spend it but as

one that loveth God better than any thing in the world, and that taketh more pleasure in his service than in sin and vanity : Spend it but as the *necessities* of thy own *soul*, and thy *families* require; as one that's glad of so honourable, gainful, and delightful an employment, as the publick and private worshipping of God, and the serious contemplation of the life to come : As one that knoweth the need and benefit of having stated times for the service of God; and what would come of all Religion, if the Time were left to each ones will ? Spend it as men that put a just difference between the common business of this world, and the things that concern your endless state ; and that have considered the proportion of one day in seven, in reference to this different consequence of the work : Spend it as men that have lost as much time as you have done, and have need to make the best of the little that is left ;  
and



and that are behind hand so far in the matters of your salvation, and have need to work with all your might, and should be gladder of the helps of such a day, than of thousands of gold and silver: Spend it as those that believe that we owe God as much service as the *Jews* did: Spend it as the antient Christians spent it, that were wont to stay together almost from morning till night in publick worship and communion: Spend it as the Kings declaration requireth, which saith [*Our purpose and Resolution is, and shall be, to take care that the Lords Day be applied to holy exercises, without unnecessary divertisements.*]

2. And if yet there be any doubt in this, I refer you to the judgement of the Church of *England*, expressed in the *Homily of the Time and place of Prayer*. And for the *Time*, the *Name*, the *Antiquity*, and *Authority*, and the *Work* it self, I desire you but to receive what is there delivered, not by any factious persons, but by the Church,

Church. Do this, and we are agreed and satisfied. And I make it my request to the Reader, to peruse both *Parts* of that *Homily*, that he may know how far the Church of *England* is from the loose conceits of the enemies of Godliness : And if also you will read over the *Homilies* against the Peril of Idolatry, you will the fullier know the judgement of the Church about the manner of Gods worship. ( Indeed the whole Book is such as the people should be acquainted with. )

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I have

**I** Have done my part to open to you the Necessity of *SERIOUS DILIGENCE*, and to call up the sluggish souls of sinners to mind the work of their salvation, and to do it *SPEEDILY*, and with all their *MIGHT*. I must now leave the success to God and you. What use you will make of it, and what you will be and do for the time to come, is a matter that more concerneth your selves than me. If long speaking, or multitude of words, were the way to prevail with you, I should willingly speak here while my strength would endure, and lengthen out my exhortations yet seven-fold. But that's not the way: A little wearieth you: You love long feasts, and long visits, and playes, and sports, much better than long Sermons, or Books, or Prayers. But it is no small grief to us, to leave you in a cause of such importance, without some

some considerable hopes of your deliverance.

Sirs, the matter is now laid before you, and much in your own hands; it will not be so long! What will you now do? Have I *convinced* you now, that God and your salvation are to be sought with all your might? If I have not, it is not for want of evidence in what is said, but for want of willingness in your selves to know the truth: I have proved to you, that it is a matter *out of controverſie*, unless your lusts, and passions, and carnal interest will *make a controverſie* of it. I beseech you tell me if you be of any Religion at all, why are you not *ſtrict*, and *ſerious*, and *diligent*, and *mortified*, and *heavenly in that Religion* which you are of? Sure you will not so far shame your own Religion, whatever it be, as to say that your Religion is not for mortification, holiness, heavenlyneſs, ſelfdenyal, or that your Religion alloweth you to be ambitious, covetous,

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gluttonous, drunken, to curse, and swear, and whore, and rail, and oppress the innocent: It is not *Religion*, but *Diabolical serpentine malignity* that is for any of this.

Its wonderful to think, that learned men, and Gentlemen, and men that pretend to reason and ingenuity, can quietly betray their souls to the Devil upon such silly grounds, and do the evil that they have no more to say for, and neglect that duty that they have no more to say against, when they know they must do it **NOW** or **NEVER**! That while they *confess* that there is a God, and a life to come, a Heaven and a Hell, and that this life is purposely given us for preparation of Eternity, while they *confess* that God is most wise, and holy, and good, and just, and that sin is the greatest evil, and that the word of God is true, they can yet make shift to quiet themselves in an unholy, sensual, careless life: And that  
while

while they honour the Apostles and Martyrs, and Saints that are dead and gone, they hate their successors and imitators, and the lives that they lived, and are inclined to make more Martyrs by their malicious cruelty.

Alas, all this comes from the want of a sound belief of the things which they never saw; and the distance of those things, and the power of passion, and sensual objects and inclinations, that hurry them away after present vanities, and conquer reason, and rob them of their humanity; and by the noise of the company of sensual sinners, that harden and deafen one another, and by the just judgement of God forsaking those that would not know him, and leaving them to the blindness and hardness of their hearts. But is there *no remedy*! O thou the fountain of mercy and relief, vouchsafe these miserable sinners a remedy! O thou the Saviour of lost mankind,  
have

have mercy upon these sinners in the depth of their security, presumption and misery ! O thou the Illuminator and Sanctifier of souls, apply the remedy so dearly purchased ! We are constrained oft to fear lest it be much long of *us*, that should more *seriously* preach the awakning truths of God unto mens hearts. And verily our consciences cannot but accuse us, that when we are most *lively* and serious, alas, we seem but almost to trifle, considering on what a message we come, and of what transcendent things we speak. But Satan hath got his advantage upon *our hearts* that should be instrumental to kindle *theirs*, as well as *on theirs* that should receive the truth. O that we could thirst more after their salvation ! O that we could pray harder for it ; and entreat them more earnestly ; as those that were loth to take a denial from God or man ; I must confess to you all with shame and sorrow, that I am even  
 amazed

amazed to think of the hardness of my own heart, that melteth no more in compassion to be miserable, and is no more earnest and importunate with sinners, when I am upon such a *subject as this*; and am telling them that it must be NOW or NEVER; and when the messengers of *Death within*, and the *fame of mens displeasure from without*, doth tell me how likely it is that *my Time* shall be but *short*, and that if I will say any thing that may reach the hearts of sinners, for ought I know, it must be NOW or NEVER. O what an obstinate, what a lamentable disease is this insensibility and hardness of heart! If I were sure this were the last Sermon that ever I should preach, I find now my heart would shew its sluggishness, and rob poor souls of the *serious fervour* which is suitable to the subject and their case, and needful to the desired success.

But yet, poor sleepy sinners, *hear us*: Though we speak not to you  
as



as men would do that had *seen Heaven and Hell* ; and were themselves in a perfectly a wakened frame, yet *hear us* while we speak to you the *words of Truth* with some *seriousness* and compassionate desire of your Salvation. O look up to your God ! Look out unto eternity : Look inwardly upon your souls : Look wisely upon your short and hasty Time : and then bethink you how the little remnant of your Time should be employed ; and what it is that *most* concerneth you to dispatch and secure before you dye: *Now* you have *Sermons*, and *Books*, and *Warnings* : It will not be so long: Preachers must have done: God threatneth them, and *death* threatneth them, and men threaten them, and it's *you*, it's *you* that are most severely threatned, and that are called on by Gods warnings, [ *If any man have an ear to hear, let him hear.* ] *Now* you have abundance of private helps, you have abundance of under-

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derstanding gracious companions; you have the Lords dayes to spend in holy exercises for the edification and solace of your souls; you have choice of sound and serious Books: and blessed be God, you have the Protection of a Christian and a Protestant King and Magistracy: O what unvaluable mercies are all these! O know your time, and use these with industry; and improve this harvest for your souls! For it will not be thus *alwayes*: It must be NOW or NEVER.

You have yet time and leave to Pray and cry to God in hope: Yet if you have hearts and tongues, he hath a hearing ear; The Spirit of grace is ready to assist you: It will not be thus *alwayes*: The time is coming when the loudest cries will do no good: O pray, pray, pray poor needy miserable sinners; for it must be NOW or NEVER.

You have yet health and strength, and bodies fit to serve your souls:

souls : It will not be so *alwayes* : Languishing and pains and death are coming. O use your health and strength for God : for it must be **NOW** or **NEVER**.

Yet there are some stirrings of *conviction* in your *Consciences* : You find that all is not well with you : and you have some thoughts or purposes to repent and be new creatures : There is some hope in this, that yet God hath not quite forsaken you. O trifle not and stifle not the convictions of your consciences, but hearken to the witness of God within you: It must be **NOW**, or **NEVER**.

Would you not be loth to be left to the despairing case of many poor distressed souls, that cry out, *O it is now too late ! I fear my day of grace is past ; God will not hear me now if I should call upon him: he hath forsaken me, & given me over to myself. It is too late to repent, too late to pray, too late to think of a new life ; all is too late.*

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This case is sad: But yet many of these are in a safer and better case than they imagin, and are but *frightned* by the Tempter, and it is *not too late*, while they cry out, *It is too late*; But if you are left to cry in *Hell* [ *it is too late* ] alas, how long and how *doleful* a cry and lamentation will it be!

O consider poor sinner, that God knoweth the *Time* and *Season* of thy *mercies*: He giveth thee *Spring* and *Harvest* in their *Season*: and all his mercies in their *Season*, and wilt thou not know thy *Time* and *Season*, for *love* and *duty* and *thanks* to him?

Consider that God who hath commanded thee thy work, hath also appointed thee thy time: And this is his appointed time. To day therefore hearken to his voice and see that thou harden not thy heart: He that bids thee *Repent* and *work out thy Salvation with fear and trembling*, doth also bid thee do it *Now*: Obey him in the *time*, if thou wilt be indeed *obedient*;

*obedient*; He best understandeth the  
 fittest time. One would think to  
 men that have lost so much already,  
 and loitered so long, and are so la-  
 menrably behind hand, and stand so  
 near the bar of God, and their ever-  
 lasting state, there should be no need  
 to say any more, to perswade them to  
 be up and doing. I shall add but this:  
*You are never like to have a better  
 time.* Take this or the work will  
 grow more *difficult*, more *doubtful*,  
 if through the just judgement of God,  
 it become not *desperate*. If all this  
 will not serve, but still you will loiter  
 till time be gone, what can your poor  
 friends do but lament your misery!  
 The Lord knows, if we knew what  
 words, what pains, what cost would  
 tend to your awakening, and conver-  
 sion, and salvation, we should be glad  
 to submit to it: and we hope we  
 should not think our labours, or liber-  
 ties, or our lives too dear to promote  
 so blessed and so necessary a work.  
 But if when all is done that we can  
 do,

do, you will leave us nothing but our tears and moans for self-destroyers, the sin is yours, and the suffering shall be yours: If I can do no more, I shall leave this upon record, that *we took our Time* to tell you home, that **SERIOUS DILIGENCE** is necessary to your Salvation, and that *God is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. xi. 6. and that *this was your day, your only day*: It must be **NOW** or **NEVER**,

**FINIS.**



